SPECIAL

1
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1988

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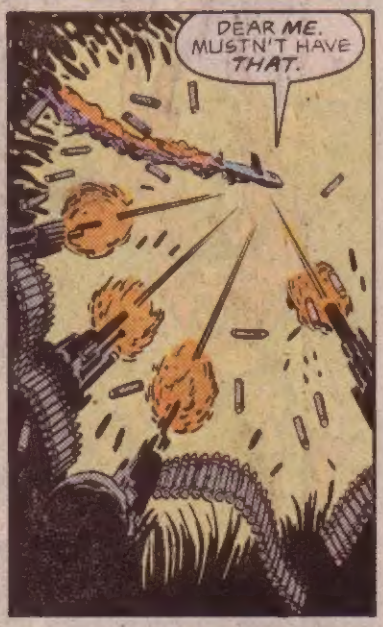
THE DOOM PATROL! and SUICIDE SQUAD™

DC COMICS AREN'T JUST FOR KIDS!

BY OSTRANDER, KUPPERBERG, LARSEN & LEWIS

DAY ONE. 7:17 AM, CST.
OH BLOODY BLAST! THAT ONE GOT US, LADS. NUMBER TWO ENGINE'S BOUGHT IT!

CAN'T YOU DO SOMETHING, PILOT?!
WELL, I COULD TRY LANDING US SOMEWHERE...
...IF ONE OF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND AS TO FIND US A STRETCH OF JUNGLE CLEAR OF BLOODY SANDINISTAS!
JUST DO SOMETHING BEFORE I LOSE MY LUNCH, HUH?


DEAR ME. MUSTN'T HAVE THAT.

ALL RIGHT, MATES. WE'RE GOING IN... GRAB HOLD OF SOMETHING SOLID AND ...OH!

BRAT-A-TAT-TA

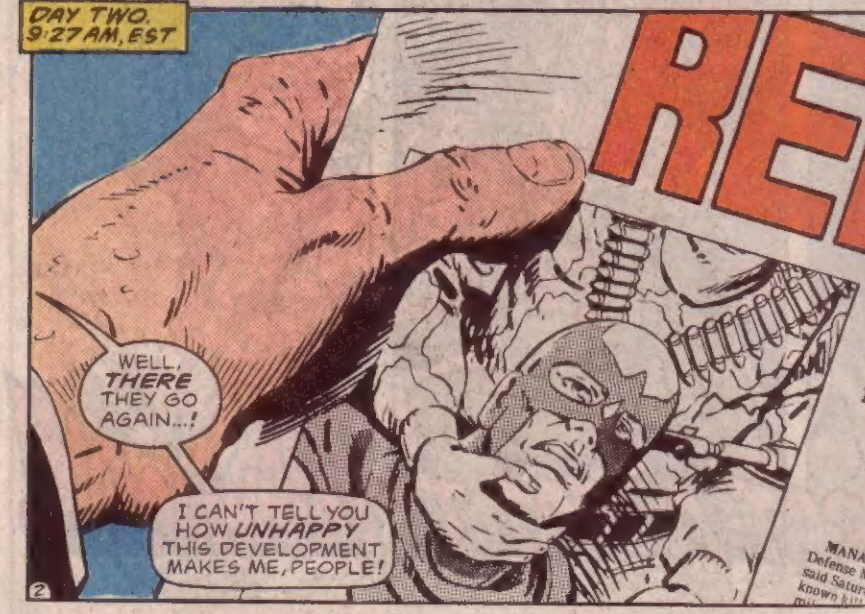
HELL--!
HAVE TO GO FOR THE TREES... HOPE THEY BREAK MY FALL...
BHAWHOOM!

OOOOFF! MADE IT... WHICH IS MORE THAN I CAN SAY FOR MY TRAVELLING COMPANIONS, THEN AGAIN, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED--

--MAYBE THEY'RE THE LUCKY ONES!

ME? I'M YOUR AVERAGE ALL-AMERICAN GUY FED UP WITH THE COMMIES MAKING A MESS OUT OF THE U.S.A.'S BACKYARD!
KHRAK!

WHAK!
THUKK


DAY TWO. 9:27 AM, EST
WELL, THERE THEY GO AGAIN...!
I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW UNHAPPY THIS DEVELOPMENT MAKES ME, PEOPLE!
2

26, 1987
RED PAW
Plotted by JOHN OSTRANDER
Scripted by PAUL KUPPERBERG
Pencilled by ERIK LARSEN
Inked by BOB LEWIS
Lettered by STEVE HAYNIE
Colored by CARL GAFFORD
MIKE GOLD
MANAGUA, Nicaragua — A
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known kil
It said seven others
missing and eight, includ
pilot and co-pilot, were
hospitalized.
A communique issued
when the crash occurre
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were
The Soviet-made
hit by a U.S.-made
contra rebels abou
north of Ma
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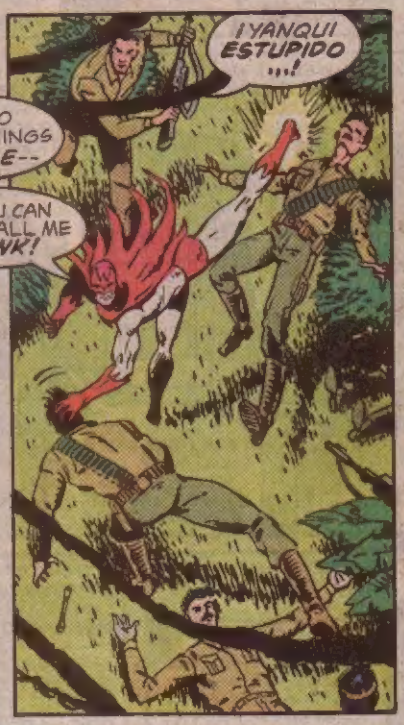
S!
¡HACE ALTO, HOMBRE! ¿QUIEN ES USTED?

WHAK!
BUT TO KEEP THINGS SIMPLE--
--YOU CAN JUST CALL ME HAWK!
THUKK

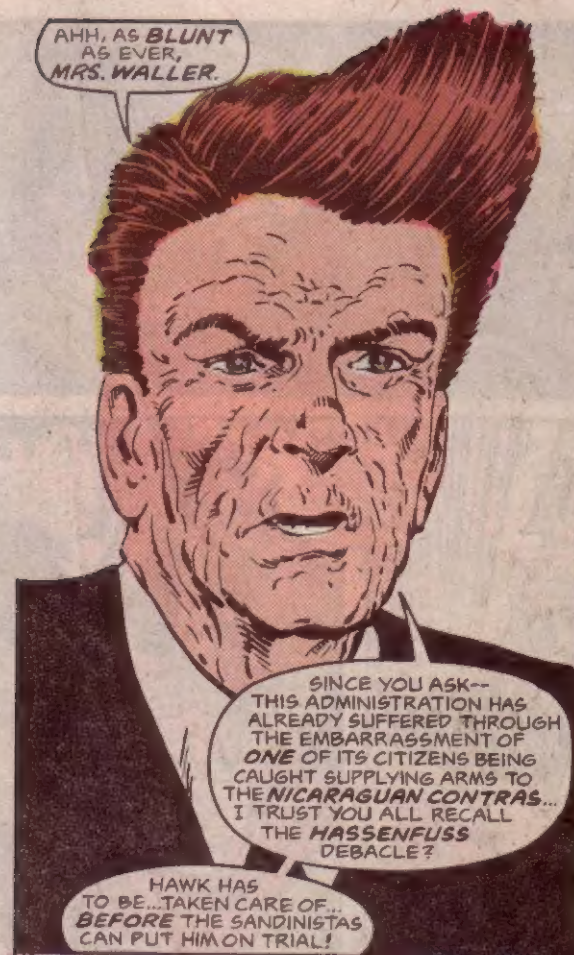

¡YANQUI ESTUPIDO ...!

WHAM!

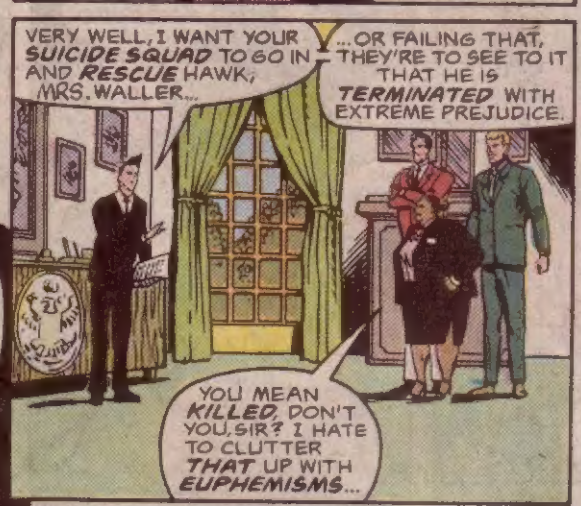
TENGO LE. ¡NO HARA DIFFICULTAD AHORA!

1987
Chronicle
75 CENTS
PAWN"
Lettered by STEVE HAYNIE
Colored by CARL GAFFORD
MIKE GOLD
Edited by ROBERT & GREENBERGER
It said seven others were missing and eight, including the pilot and co-pilot, were hospitalized.
A communique issued Fr
when the crash occurred
notega proni
The Soviet-made helicopter was hit by a U.S.-made missile fi
contra rebels about
north of Mana

NONE OF US ARE VERY PLEASED, SIR. THE QUESTION REMAINS, WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?


AHH, AS BLUNT AS EVER, MRS. WALLER.
SINCE YOU ASK-- THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS ALREADY SUFFERED THROUGH THE EMBARRASSMENT OF ONE OF ITS CITIZENS BEING CAUGHT SUPPLYING ARMS TO THE NICARAGUAN CONTRAS... I TRUST YOU ALL RECALL THE HASSENFUSS DEBACLE?
HAWK HAS TO BE...TAKEN CARE OF... BEFORE THE SANDINISTAS CAN PUT HIM ON TRIAL!

WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL US, MR. PRESIDENT?
I THINK IT'S OBVIOUS, AMANDA. HE WANTS US TO...
I WANT TO HEAR IT FROM YOU, SIR. I DON'T WANT THERE TO BE ANY DOUBTS...LATER ON.

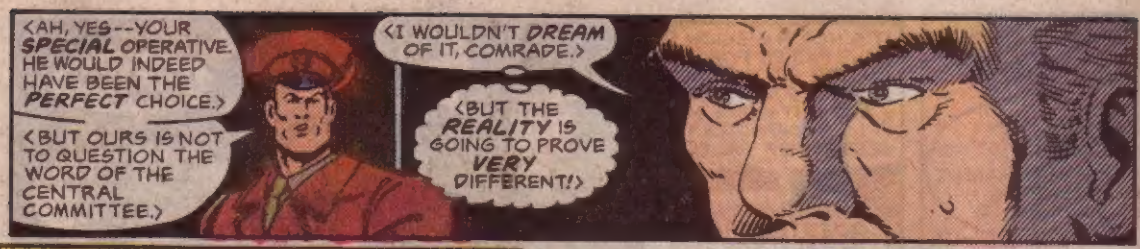

VERY WELL, I WANT YOUR SUICIDE SQUAD TO GO IN AND RESCUE HAWK, MRS. WALLER...
...OR FAILING THAT, THEY'RE TO SEE TO IT THAT HE IS TERMINATED WITH EXTREME PREJUDICE.
YOU MEAN KILLED, DON'T YOU, SIR? I HATE TO CLUTTER THAT UP WITH EUPHEMISMS...

I DON'T LIKE THIS, MATT!
I'M NOT THRILLED BY IT EITHER, JACK--
--BUT AMANDA WALLER'S TASK FORCE X AND SUICIDE SQUAD HAS BEEN GRABBING ALL THE GLORY AROUND HERE LATELY. SHE'S MAKING US LOOK BAD.

MAYBE IT'S ABOUT TIME WE RETURNED THE FAVOR.
HOW? SHE'S IN SOLID WITH THE PRESIDENT. HER GROUP WOULD HAVE TO MESS UP PRETTY BAD TO TAKE ANY SERIOUS HEAT.

I THINK THAT CAN BE ARRANGED, MATT. LISTEN, REMEMBER VAL VOSTOK?
SHE'S BACK WITH THE DOOM PATROL. WE USED TO BE CHUMMY, AND I THINK MAYBE I CAN CON HER INTO DOING THE JOB FOR US...!

BELLE REVE FEDERAL PRISON. 12:33 PM, CST.
THIS ONE SMELLS... EXCEPT IT COMES STRAIGHT FROM THE PRESIDENT.
IT'S NOT A MISSION I'D HAVE PICKED FOR THE SUICIDE SQUAD, COLONEL FLAG. IT'S HIGH PROFILE ...AND IF IT GOES SOUR, IT'LL JEOPARDIZE THE SECRECY OF THE SQUAD.
THEN THERE'S THE QUESTIONABLE MORALITY OF THE ENTIRE VENTURE...
LIKE YOU SAID, MRS. WALLER, YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS.
NOW I HAVE MINE.
WE'RE BOTH GOOD SOLDIERS. WE GO WHERE WE'RE TOLD.
MOSCOW, RUSSIAN SOVIET FEDERATED SOCIALIST REPUBLIC, 9:58 PM, GMT.
<CONFIRMATION FROM MANAGUA HAS BEEN RECEIVED, COMRADE. THE SANDINISTAS HAVE GRACIOUSLY AGREED TO OUR OFFER OF AID.>
<AS THOUGH THE FOOLS HAD A CHOICE...>
<FRANKLY, I DO NOT BELIEVE SENDING THE ROCKET RED TROOPS TO NICARAGUA TO BE THE WISEST POLICY.>
<WHAT IF THEIR PRESENCE IS DISCOVERED? IT COULD BE DISASTROUS!>
<TRUE. SUCH A SHOW OF FORCE COULD ONLY BE A PROVOCATION. TAKING OVER SECURITY AND ESCORTING THE AMERICAN PRISONER BACK TO MOSCOW SHOULD HAVE BEEN LEFT TO MY KGB.
5



DAY THREE. NICARAGUA. 10:00 AM, CST.

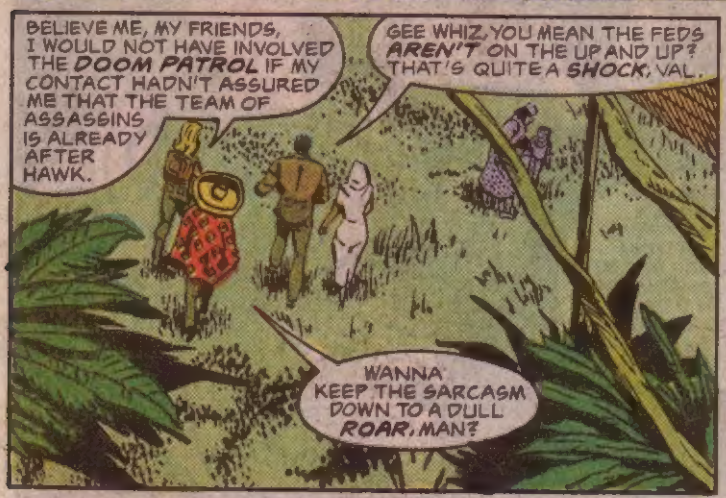
I STILL SAY WE ARE WASTING OUR TIME. THE POLITICAL SQUABBLES OF THIS NATION ARE NONE OF OUR CONCERN.

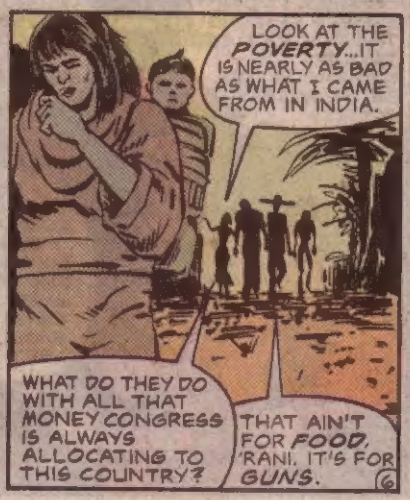
AT LEAST THEY SHOULDN'T BE, ARANI. LAST TIME THE U.S. STARTED STICKING ITS NOSE INTO A SITUATION LIKE THIS ONE...

...WE WOUND UP IN VIETNAM. I WAS IN THAT ONE AND I DON'T WANT MY KIDS TO HAVE TO GO THROUGH THAT HERE.

YOU AIN'T GOT KIDS, JOSHUA, AND LIKE IT OR NOT, DON'T FORGET THERE'S AN AMERICAN CITIZEN BEIN' HELD BY THESE CLOWNS.

ONE WHO HAS BEEN EARMARKED FOR DEATH BY HIS OWN GOVERNMENT! THAT IS UNCONSCIONABLE, CLIFF.





MAN, THIS WHOLE THING STINKS. I MEAN, WHAT THE HELL WAS HAWK DOING RUNNING GUNS TO THE CONTRAS ANYWAY?
STUPIDITY IS NOT A CAPITAL OFFENSE, JOSHUA.

HEY! IN CASE YOU'RE FORGETTIN', WE'RE SUPPOSED T'BE HERE UNDERCOVER ... THAT MEANS STAYIN' INCONSPICUOUS.

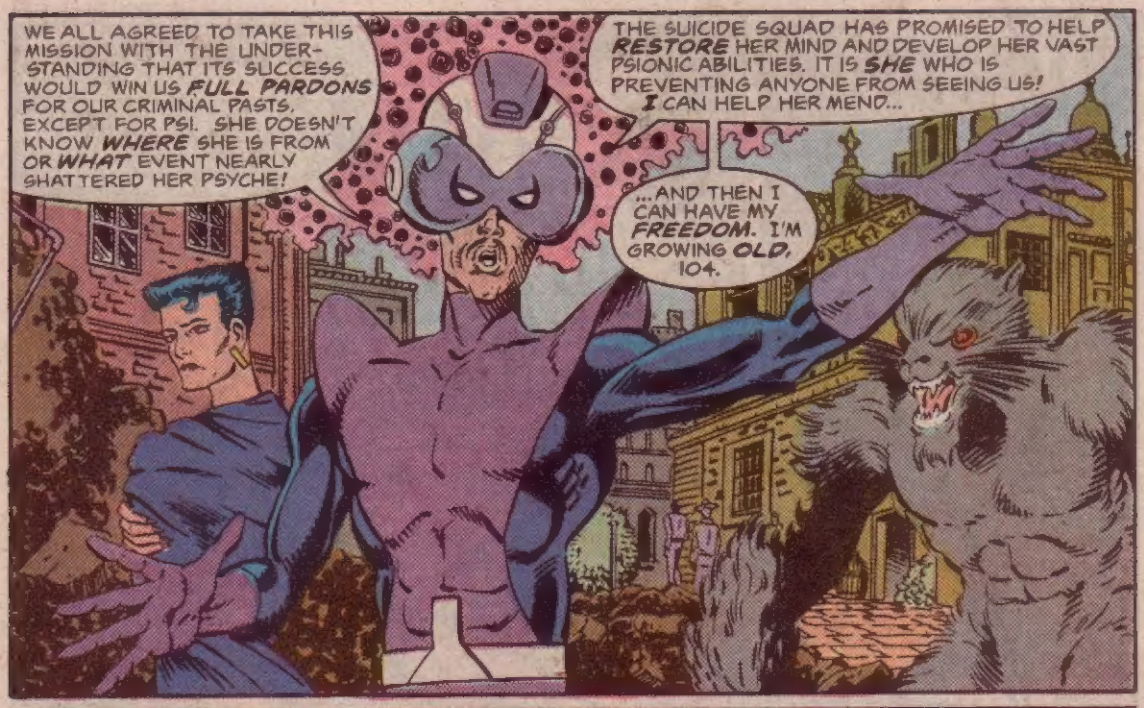
YES. LET US GET THIS DONE SO WE CAN RETURN TO KANSAS CITY.
I'M WITH YOU, LADY.
THEN LET'S GET ORGANIZED FOR A CHANGE.

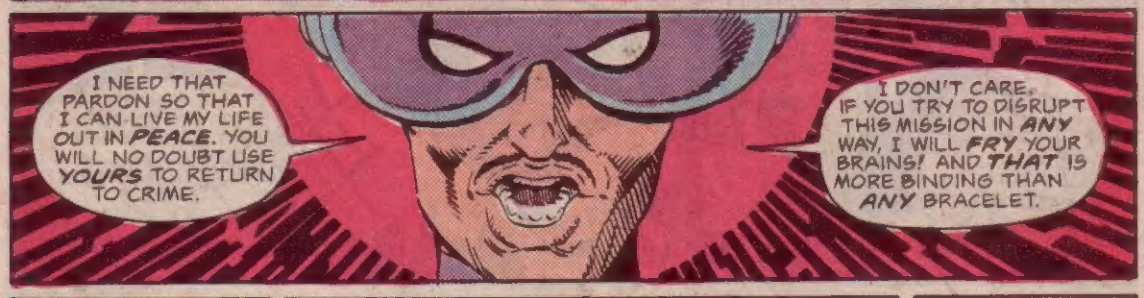
WAY I SEE IT, WE GOT AN EDGE OVER WHOEVER'S BEEN SENT TO OFF HAWK BEFORE THE SANDINISTAS PUT HIM ON TRIAL AND THINGS GET REAL EMBARRASSIN'--
--WE KNOW THEY'RE HERE, BUT THEY DON'T KNOW WE'RE ON TO 'EM.

BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHO THEY ARE, CLIFF.
SO FINDIN' WHERE THEY'RE HOLDIN' HAWK'S PRIORITY ONE.
THINK WE SHOULD SPLIT UP AND WIDEN THE SEARCH?

LONG AS WE AIN'T ATTRACTIN' ATTENTION, LET'S HANG TOGETHER A WHILE LONGER.
JUST KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED, TROOPS.

THERE'RE OTHERS HERE!
THEY CALL THEMSELVES ...THE DOOM PATROL!
THE DOOM PATROL--?! NO ONE TOLD ME I'D BE GETTING ANOTHER CHANCE AT THEM!
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT, MR. 104! THE SUICIDE SQUAD RELEASED YOU FROM PRISON TO HELP LIBERATE HAWK*.
YOU DISOBEY ORDERS AND THE EXPLOSIVE CHARGE ON YOUR WRIST BLOWS YOU INTO MAÑANA!
*AFTER HIS DEFEAT IN TEEN TITANS SPOTLIGHT #9 --M & B.
YOU FORGET TO WHOM YOU SPEAK, COL. FLAG... MR. 104--MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS. IT'S CHILD'S PLAY FOR ME TO TURN YOUR PRECIOUS BRACELETS INTO LAUGHABLE NITROUS OXIDE!
HUH--!
WHILE PSI AND I NEED ONLY APPLY THE MILDEST PSYCHIC PRESSURE TO THEIR MECHANISMS.
AND I CAN JUST AS EASILY MAKE YOU DISAPPEAR, FLAG! I...WHA...?!
BUT YOU WILL NOT, MR. DUBROVNY.
PLEASE THINK BEFORE ACTING, FOR ONCE.


WE ALL AGREED TO TAKE THIS MISSION WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT ITS SUCCESS WOULD WIN US FULL PARDONS FOR OUR CRIMINAL PASTS, EXCEPT FOR PSI. SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHERE SHE IS FROM OR WHAT EVENT NEARLY SHATTERED HER PSYCHE!
THE SUICIDE SQUAD HAS PROMISED TO HELP RESTORE HER MIND AND DEVELOP HER VAST PSIONIC ABILITIES. IT IS SHE WHO IS PREVENTING ANYONE FROM SEEING US! I CAN HELP HER MEND...
...AND THEN I CAN HAVE MY FREEDOM. I'M GROWING OLD, 104.


I NEED THAT PARDON SO THAT I CAN LIVE MY LIFE OUT IN PEACE. YOU WILL NO DOUBT USE YOURS TO RETURN TO CRIME.
I DON'T CARE. IF YOU TRY TO DISRUPT THIS MISSION IN ANY WAY, I WILL FRY YOUR BRAINS! AND THAT IS MORE BINDING THAN ANY BRACELET.

THEN LET'S GET ON WITH IT. HAVE YOU LOCATED HAWK YET, THINKER?
WE HAVE BEEN SEEKING HIS MENTAL PATTERN, COL. FLAG. PSI?

I HAVE HIM, THINKER. SEE IT? THE OLD SPANISH FORTRESS WE PASSED AT THE MOUTH OF THE BAY.
LOTS OF SOLDIERS THERE TOO.
SURE. HAWK IS BIG TIME PROPAGANDA FOR THESE GUYS AND THEY'RE NOT ABOUT TO LET HIM GET AWAY.

THE NAME OF THE GAME IS STEALTH, SQUAD. WE'RE HERE UNDER DEEP COVER!
FOR NOW.

BUT I OWE YOU, OLD MAN... AND MR. 104 PAYS HIS DEBTS. JUST YOU WAIT...

9:56 PM, CST.
HA HA! HEY... YANQUI HERO! HOW COME YOU NO USE YER WINGS TO FLY AWAY? HA HA HA!
HEEHEEE! SI, SI... FLY AWAY!
C'MON, AMERICANO... EL HALCON! SMILE! SOON YOU GONNA BE A STAR. WE PUT YOU ON TRIAL... EL TELEVISION COME TO SEE YOU.
SI! AN' THEN WE SHOOT YOU! HA HA HA HA! ES HALCON ESTACION... HAWK SEASON!
TELL ME SOMETHING I CAN'T GUESS, TACO BRAIN! I MEAN, YOU'RE THE SAME SLIMEBALLS THAT'VE BEEN TORTURING AND KILLING CIVILIANS, AIN'T YOU?
I DON'T FIGURE YOU'RE GONNA SWEAT OFFIN' A GUY FLYING IN ARMS TO TOPPLE YOUR COMMIE PUPPET GOVERNMENT!
ONLY I'M NOT GONNA BE HERE WHEN THE FIRING SQUAD COMES!
I'LL BE LONG GONE. OVER YOUR DEAD BODIES!
OOOO! HE SCARY, NO, PEDRO?
SCARY, SI LIKE A CAGED BIRD ES SCARY! HAHAHA
HAHAHAHAHAHA
I'LL SHOW YOU, YOU SLIMY--! LEMME OUTA HERE...
YEAH
SOMEBODY LEMME OUTA HERE
10

DAY FOUR 2:22 AM, CST.

SURE, I SAID. WE CAN GO RIGHT IN, I SAID.

BUT WE GOTTA KEEP IT QUIET, I SAID.

IF WE'RE GONNA MAKE NOISE, THEY'RE GONNA CATCH US--

--AND THAT'S GONNA MAKE THIS MISSION MORE OF A HASSLE'N IT'S GOTTA BE! SO... BOOM, YA GOTTA GO KNOCK OVER THAT BUCKET..!

I AM HERE AGAINST MY WILL AND I AM NOT COMPLAINING AS MUCH AS YOU.

STOP ARGUING, BOTH OF YOU! MY NEGATIVE ENERGY HAS INCAPACITATED WHATEVER SOLDIERS SLIPPED PAST YOU...

AND ONCE I HAVE RETURNED TO MY BODY

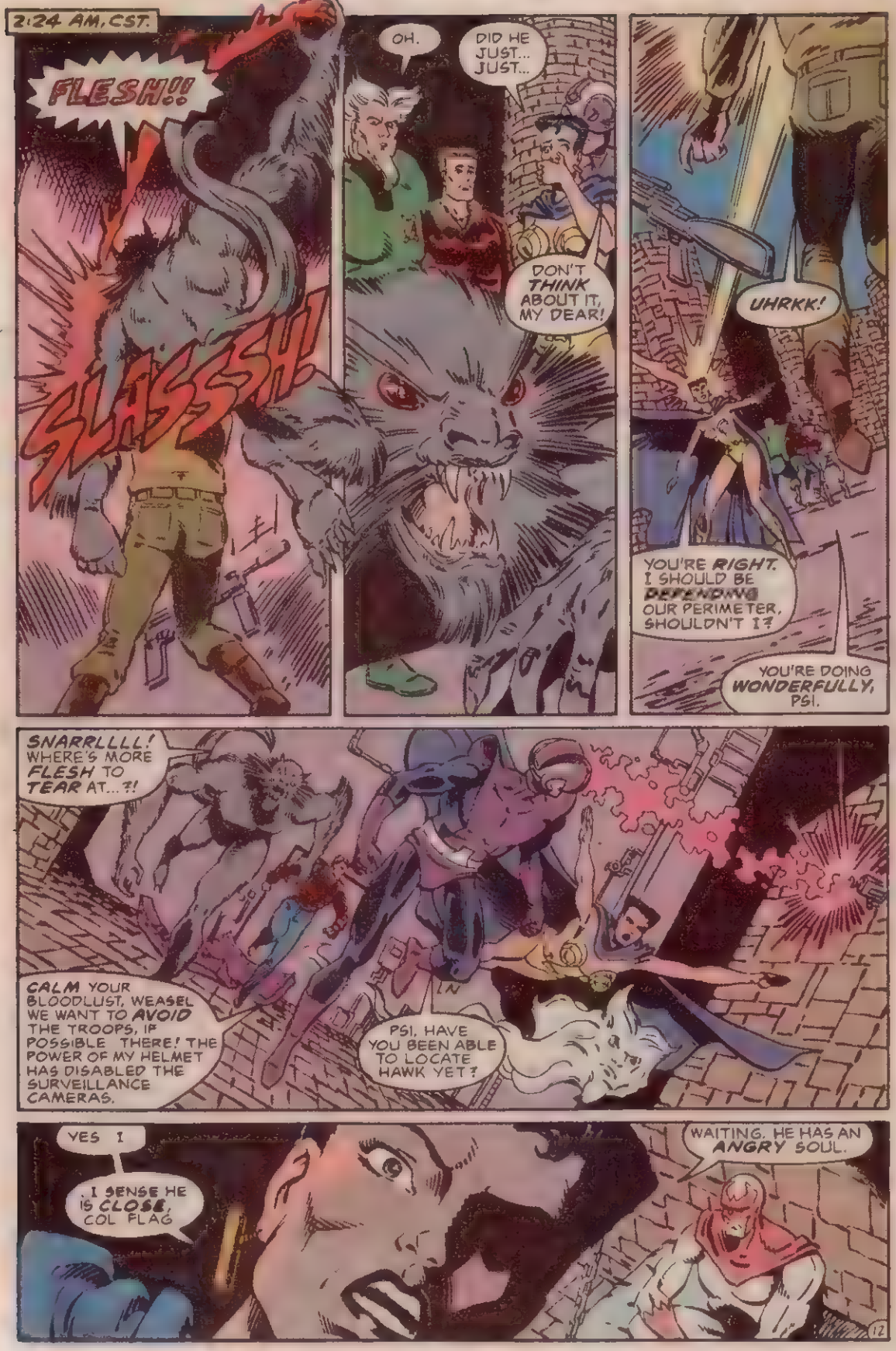
WE CAN GET ON WITH THE SEARCH FOR HAWK. JOSHUA?

JUST A SECOND, VAL

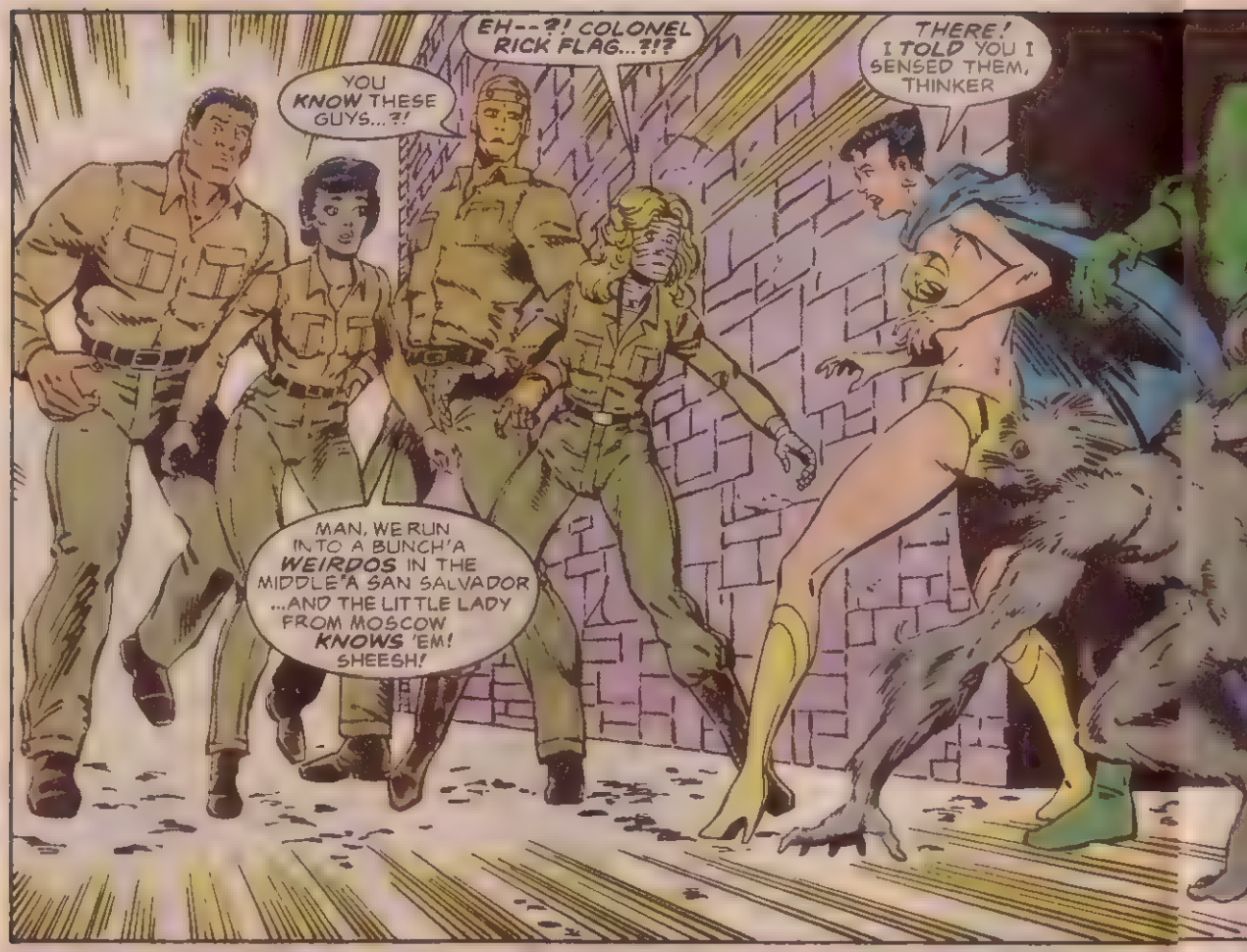
YOU MISSED ONE

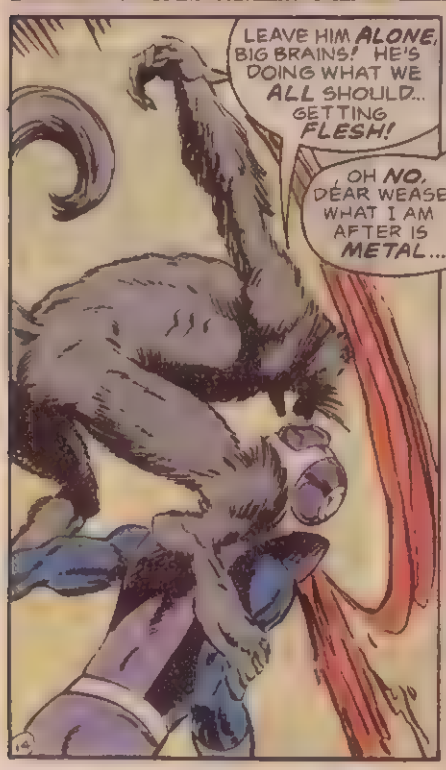
¿QUE?

WHAMM!


2:24 AM, CST.
FLESH!!
SLASSH!
OH.
DID HE JUST... JUST...
DON'T THINK ABOUT IT, MY DEAR!
UHRKK!
YOU'RE RIGHT. I SHOULD BE DEFENDING OUR PERIMETER, SHOULDN'T I?
YOU'RE DOING WONDERFULLY, PSI.
SNARRLLLL! WHERE'S MORE FLESH TO TEAR AT...?!
CALM YOUR BLOODLUST, WEASEL WE WANT TO AVOID THE TROOPS, IF POSSIBLE THERE! THE POWER OF MY HELMET HAS DISABLED THE SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS.
PSI, HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE HAWK YET?
YES I
I SENSE HE IS CLOSE, COL FLAG
WAITING. HE HAS AN ANGRY SOUL.
12

THEY ARE COMING
HOW THE HECK MANY GUARDS THEY GOT HERE?
TOO MANY, MAN.
KRAKKKLE
WHAM
.AND EVEN MORE BELOW. I'M TELLING YOU, CLIFF, THIS IS GETTING TIGHT.
I AGREE I BELIEVE THE TIME FOR SUBTLETY HAS PASSED
FOR ONCE, VALENTINA AND I ARE IN AGREEMENT, CLIFF.
SO WHAT YOU GUYS'RE TRYIN' T'TELL ME IS--
KWRESSH!
WE GOTTA BOOGIE!
RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT!
ALL RIGHT! WE WOKE EVERYBODY UP WITH THAT MOVE
I CAN DIG IT YOU WERE BRIEFED ON THIS JOINT, VAL WHERE'S THE DUNGEONS AT?
AROUND TOWARDS THE REAR OF THE CASTLE, I BELIEVE.
SURE HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, BABE.
HURRY, DOOM PATROL! WE. EH?! WHO...?!
13


YOU KNOW THESE GUYS...?!
EH--?! COLONEL RICK FLAG...?!?
THERE! I TOLD YOU I SENSED THEM, THINKER
MAN, WE RUN INTO A BUNCH'A WEIRDOS IN THE MIDDLE'A SAN SALVADOR ...AND THE LITTLE LADY FROM MOSCOW KNOWS 'EM! SHEESH!


LEAVE HIM ALONE, BIG BRAINS! HE'S DOING WHAT WE ALL SHOULD... GETTING FLESH!
OH NO, DEAR WEASEL! WHAT I AM AFTER IS METAL...

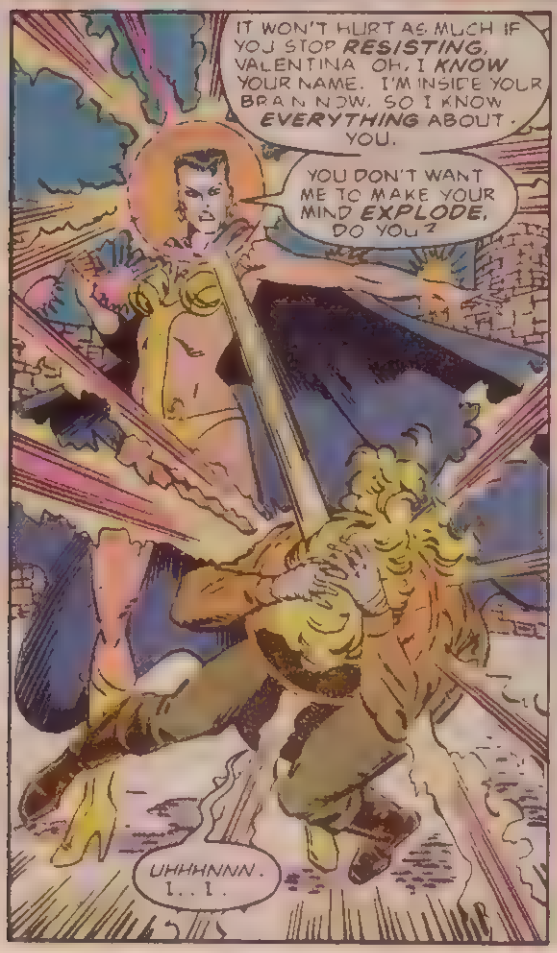
SUCH AS I HAVE BECOME TO DESTROY MY FOE!
KLANNG!

PHOOIIE! WHAT GOOD IS METAL? I LIKE MEAT... DARK MEAT'S GOOD!

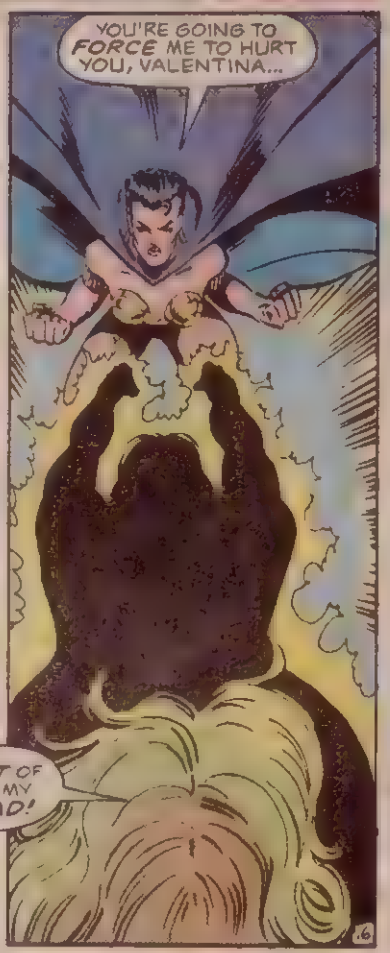
ROBOTMAN! I CAN'T BELIEVE MY LUCK!
HA HA! I CAN RIP THEIR FLESH CAN'T I?
WAIT! EVERYBODY STOP IT UNTIL.
NO! I'VE RESTRAINED MYSELF LONG ENOUGH.
BUT NOW ROBOTMAN IS HERE...AND HE'S MINE!
MR. 104! BUT ME'N CHANGELING PUT YOU IN PRISON..?!
YOU HEARD F_AG, FOOL! NOW I'M FORCED TO MENTALLY RESTRAIN YOU
LISTEN TO ME, SQUAD! I'M ORDERING YOU TO STOP!
HEY!
YOU HAD BEST EXPLAIN YOURSELF, MISTER --NOW!
WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE TO YOU FURRY A LATE NIGHT SNACK? BACK THE HELL OFF!
WHINE
SWAKASOOOOM!

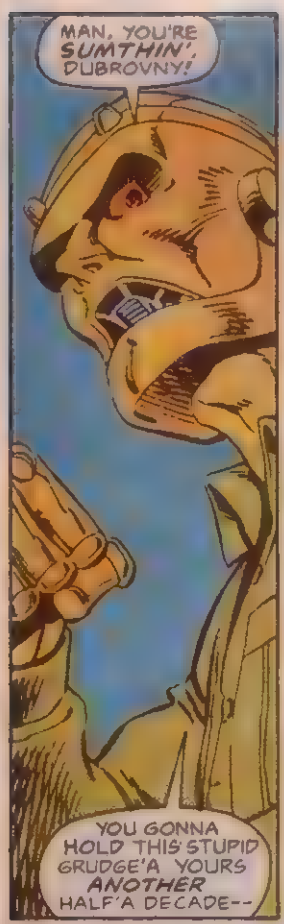
WE HAVE A MISSION TO FULFILL! THIS ISN'T...
YOU ARE IGNORING ME

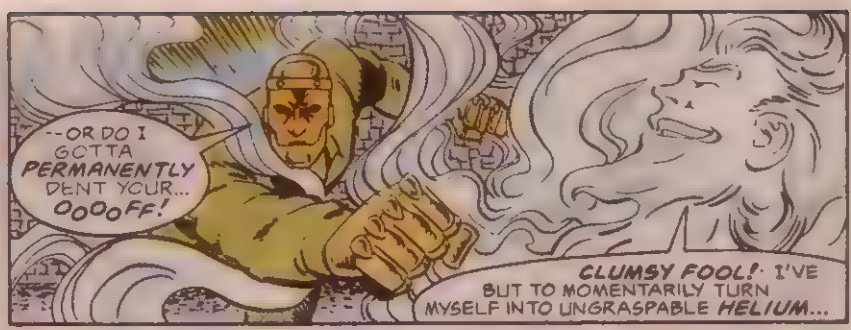
AND THAT CAN PROVE EQUALLY AS PAINFUL AS GETTING IN MY WAY!
KRAK!
HOLD IT, LADY! I'M ON UHHHN!

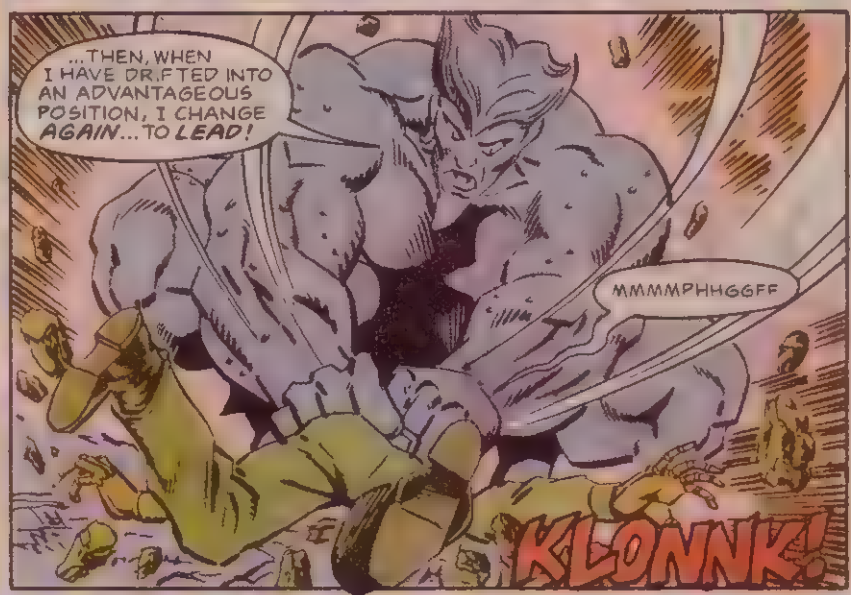

IT WON'T HURT AS MUCH IF YOU STOP RESISTING, VALENTINA. OH, I KNOW YOUR NAME. I'M INSIDE YOUR BRAIN NOW, SO I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU.
YOU DON'T WANT ME TO MAKE YOUR MIND EXPLODE, DO YOU?
UHHHNNN. I..I.

..WANT YOU..
..OUT OF ..OF MY HEAD!

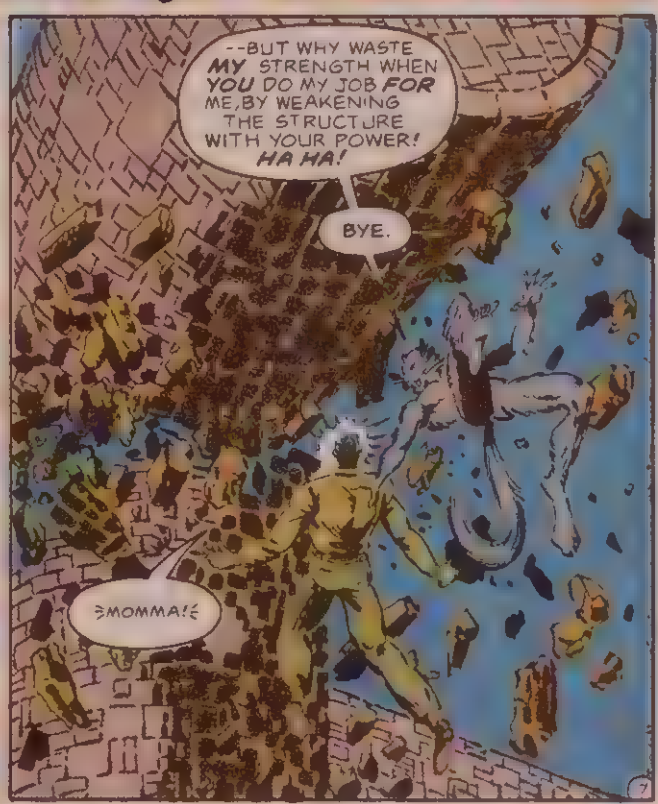

YOU'RE GOING TO FORCE ME TO HURT YOU, VALENTINA...

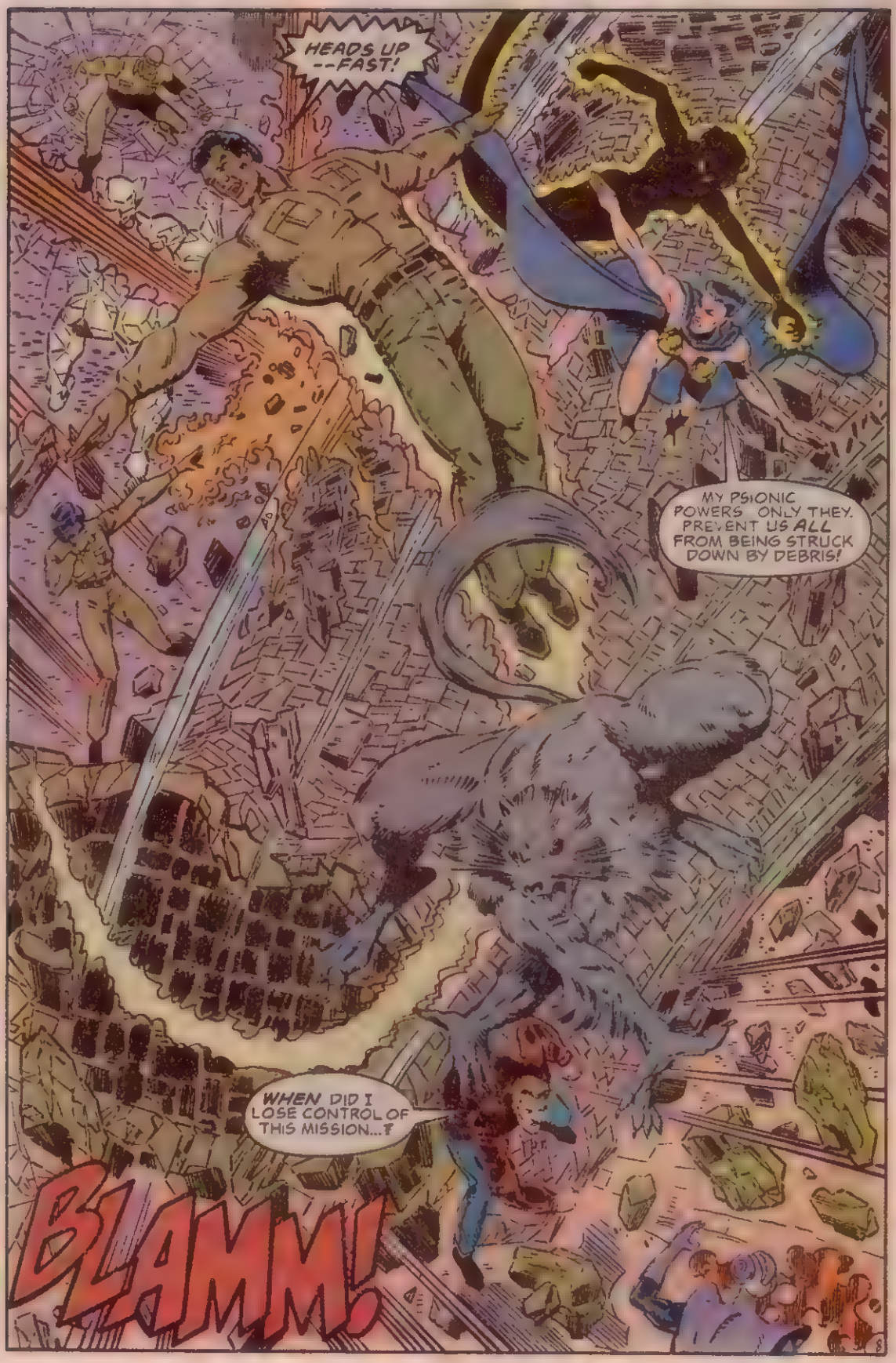

MAN, YOU'RE SUMTHIN', DUBROVNY!
YOU GONNA HOLD THIS STUPID GRUDGE'A YOURS ANOTHER HALF'A DECADE--


--OR DO I GOTTA PERMANENTLY DENT YOUR... OOOOFF!
CLUMSY FOOL! I'VE BUT TO MOMENTARILY TURN MYSELF INTO UNGRASPABLE HELIUM...

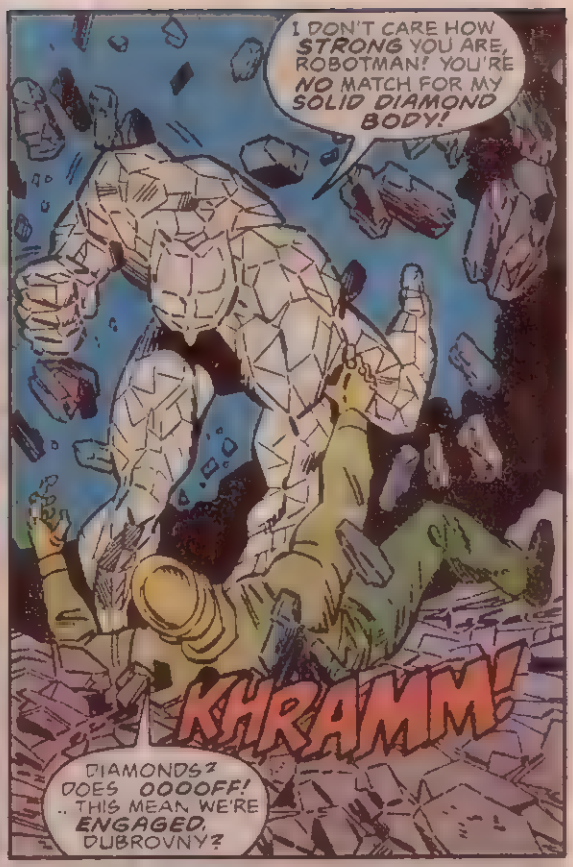

...THEN, WHEN I HAVE DRIFTED INTO AN ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION, I CHANGE AGAIN...TO LEAD!
MMMMPHHGGFF
KLONNK!

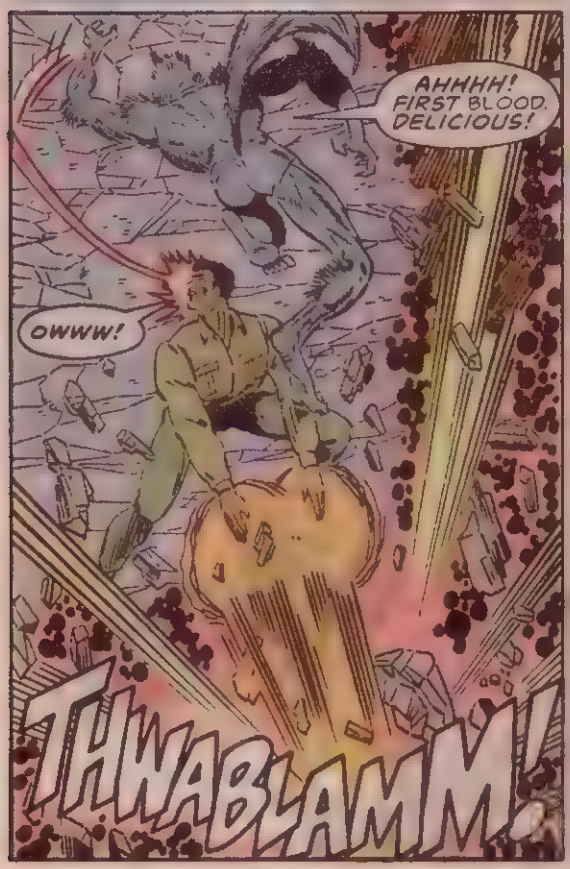
WHAT'S THE MATTER, HAIRBALL? DON'T TELL ME ONE HIT OF MY BLASTER POWER IS ALL YOU CAN TAKE?
THAT AND MORE, FLESH--
BOOOOM!


--BUT WHY WASTE MY STRENGTH WHEN YOU DO MY JOB FOR ME, BY WEAKENING THE STRUCTURE WITH YOUR POWER! HA HA!
BYE.
MOMMA!

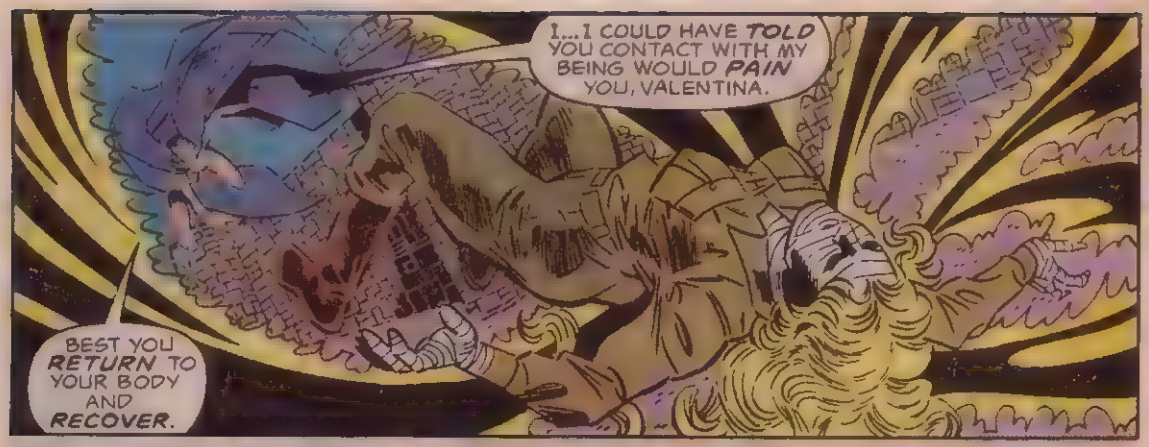

HEADS UP --FAST!
MY PSIONIC POWERS ONLY THEY PREVENT US ALL FROM BEING STRUCK DOWN BY DEBRIS!
WHEN DID I LOSE CONTROL OF THIS MISSION...?
BLAMM!

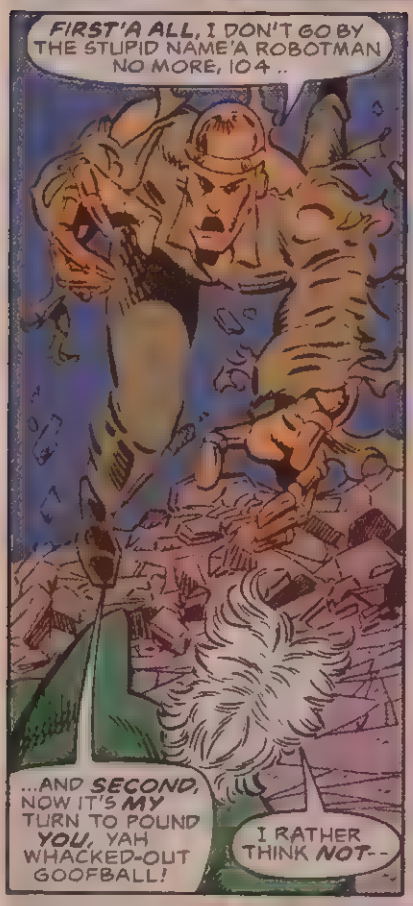
FZZTTTZZLL!
I CAN NOT AVOID PHASING THROUGH HER! WE...
ARRRRRHHH!


I DON'T CARE HOW STRONG YOU ARE, ROBOTMAN! YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR MY SOLID DIAMOND BODY!
KHRAMM!
DIAMONDS? DOES OOOOFF! .. THIS MEAN WE'RE ENGAGED, DUBROVNY?


AHHHH! FIRST BLOOD, DELICIOUS!
OWWW!
THWABLAMM!

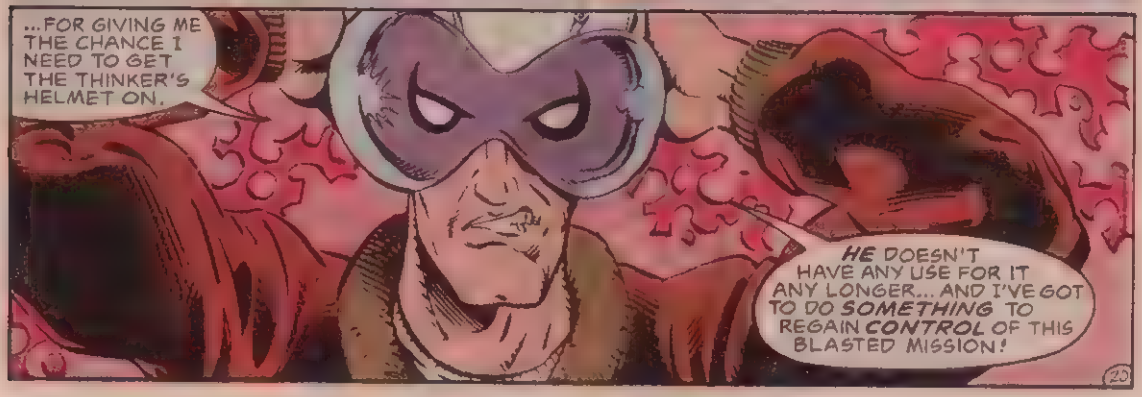
STAND UP AND TURN AROUND, COLONEL. SLOWLY.
UNLESS YOU WOULD RATHER LEARN EXACTLY WHY I AM CALLED CELSIUS.
I'VE READ YOUR DOSSIER, MRS. CAULDER, AND NORMALLY I'D BE INTIMIDATED BY YOUR COMMAND OVER HEAT AND COLD...
BUT THE THINKER'S HELMET CHANGES ALL THAT.


I...I COULD HAVE TOLD YOU CONTACT WITH MY BEING WOULD PAIN YOU, VALENTINA.
BEST YOU RETURN TO YOUR BODY AND RECOVER.


FIRST'A ALL, I DON'T GO BY THE STUPID NAME'A ROBOTMAN NO MORE, 104 ..
...AND SECOND, NOW IT'S MY TURN TO POUND YOU, YAH WHACKED-OUT GOOFBALL!
I RATHER THINK NOT--

--ROBOTMAN!
DLANGG

CLIFFORD! WHAT--?
I OWE YOUR TEAMMATE MY THANKS, CELSIUS.


...FOR GIVING ME THE CHANCE I NEED TO GET THE THINKER'S HELMET ON.
HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY USE FOR IT ANY LONGER... AND I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING TO REGAIN CONTROL OF THIS BLASTED MISSION!

ALL RIGHT, EVERYBODY-- FREEZE! RIGHT THIS INSTANT! I COMMAND YOU TO...
FREEEEUHKKK!
CHOK!
YOU KNOW IT'S FUTILE TO CONTINUE, DON'T YOU, VALENTINA?
FLESH! YES SNARL! SNORT! YES!
OWW! YOU BETTER HAVE HAD YOUR RABIES SHOT, UGLY!
CAREFUL, FLAG. NEXT TIME, I WILL DO MORE THAN HIT YOU WITH A LITTLE ICE.
I WILL FREEZE YOU SOLID.
HA HA! EVEN YOUR STRUGGLE IS SWEET TO ME, ROBOTMAN.
CRASH!
HUH--?!
ATTENTION! THESE HOSTILITIES WILL CEASE IMMEDIATELY--

--BY ORDER OF THE ROCKET RED BRIGADE!

YOU HAVE FIVE SECONDS, AMERICANS! SURRENDER YOURSELVES TO OUR CUSTODY OR YOU WILL BE DESTROYED!

I THINK WE'RE IN TROUBLE NOW, BOYS'N GIRLS...!

THE ROCKET RED BRIGADE ...HEROES OF THE SOVIET STATE! WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE...?

SAME THING WE'RE DOING-- GETTING INVOLVED IN THE POLITICS OF A COUNTRY WE DON'T BELONG IN!

BAH! RED MEN ARE JUST FLESH ...IN CANS! HAH HA HA! SO SHUT UP AND HELP WEASEL OPEN THEM, DARK MEAT!

FOR ONCE, I GOTTA AGREE WITH FIDO, JOSHUA! POLITICS DON'T COUNT FOR DOODLY RIGHT NOW, MAN--

--BUT THESE DUDES MEAN BUSINESS!

WE AWAIT YOUR ANSWER! YOU HAVE FIVE SECONDS--!

22

THE KREMLIN. THE RUSSIAN SOVIET FEDERATED SOCIALIST REPUBLIC. 11:01 AM.

<...AT . AT ONCE, COMRADE PREMIER! I SHALL SEE WHAT I CAN FIND OUT ABOUT THIS DEBACLE AND..>

<TRY, MAJOR? DEFENSE MINISTER SOKOLOV TRIED TO DO HIS JOB--->

<--AND NEED I REMIND YOU WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?>

<ULP! N-NO, COMRADE CHAIRMAN.>

<ACHH! THIS IS A DISASTER, MAJOR!>

<THIS AMERICAN MERCENARY, HAWK, WOULD HAVE PROVED USEFUL TO US...WHEN IT WAS MERELY A MATTER OF HAVING THE ROCKET RED BRIGADE ESCORT HIM FROM NICARAGUA.>

<BUT THIS--! COMRADE ZASTROW AND THE KGB WERE NOT AUTHORIZED TO INVOLVE STALNOIVOLK IN THIS MATTER. AND THE AMERICAN TASK FORCE X AND DOOM PATROL--->

<--THE POTENTIAL FOR CHAOS IS LIMITLESS.. AND THE TIMING FOR SUCH A THING ALL WRONG! RECALL OUR PEOPLE... AND INFORM COMRADE ZASTROW I WISH TO SEE HIM!>

<I...YES, COMRADE CHAIRMAN>

<ARE YOU UNWELL, COMRADE MAJOR?>

<I DO NOT KNOW ...YET. CURSE ZASTROW AND HIS INDEPENDENCE! THE CHAIRMAN WANTS TO SEE HIM>

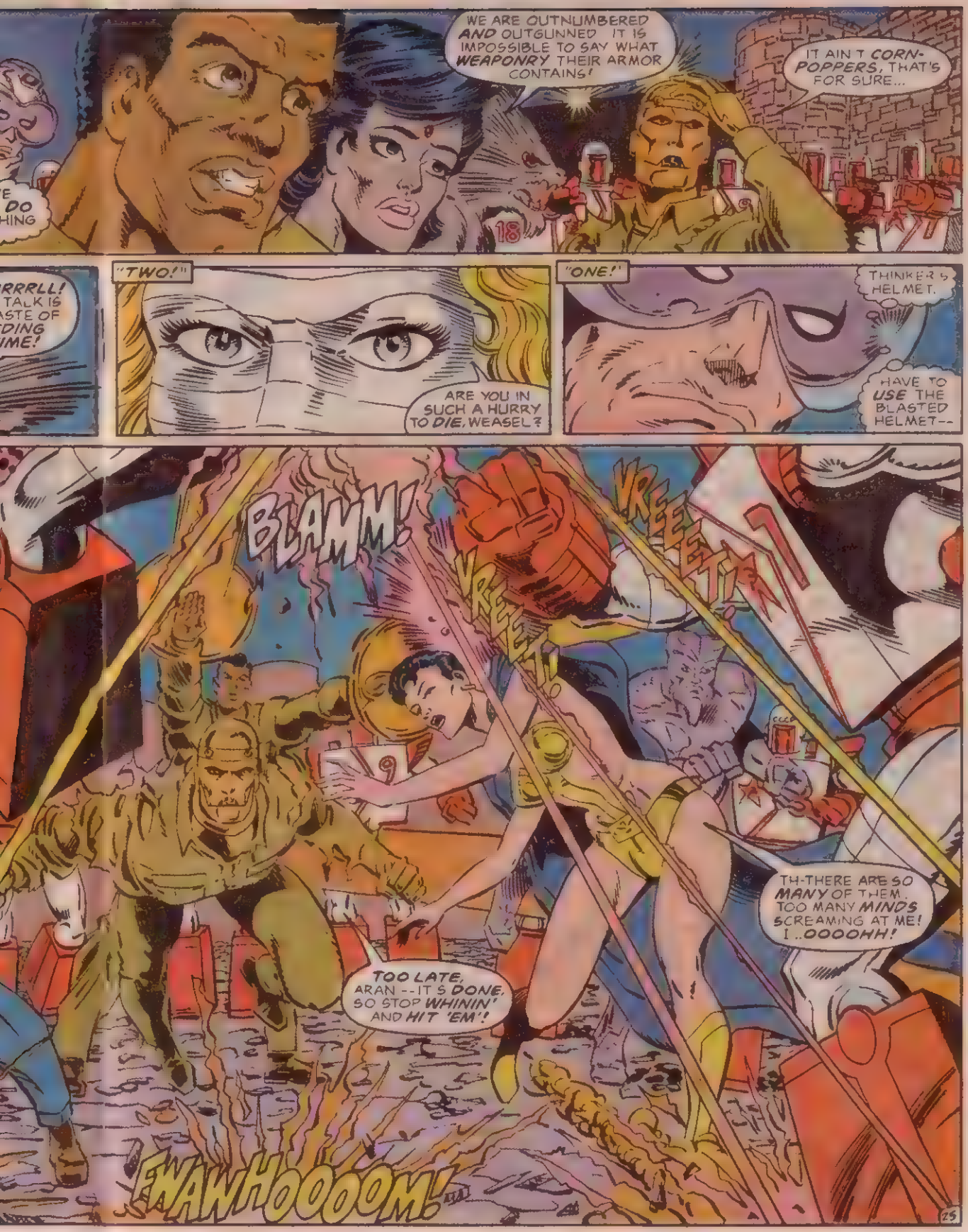
<BUT...COMRADE ZASTROW WENT TO NICARAGUA..!>

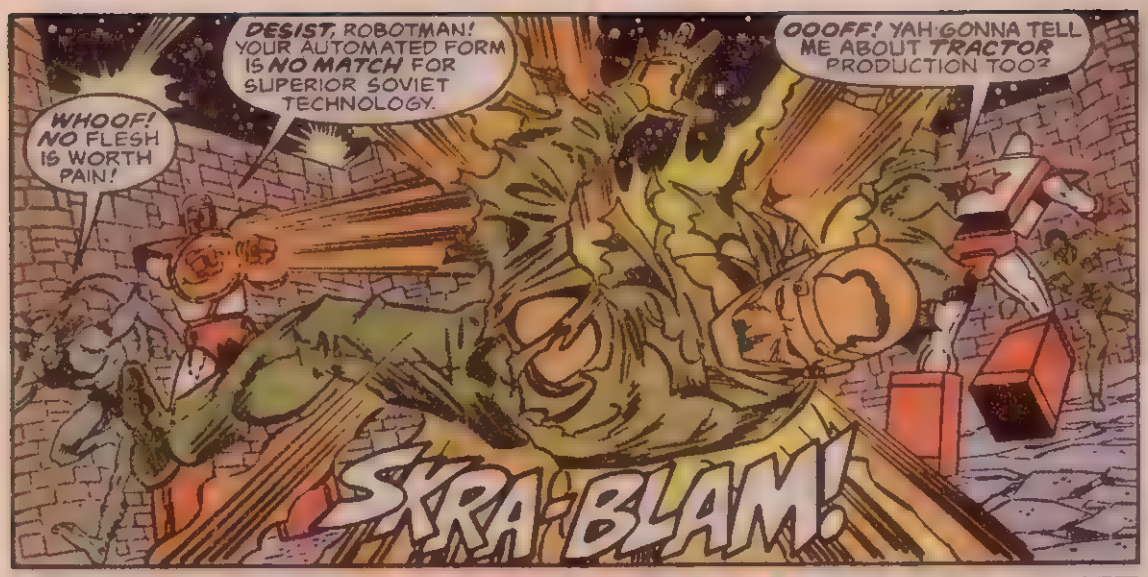
<WITHOUT ORDERS.>

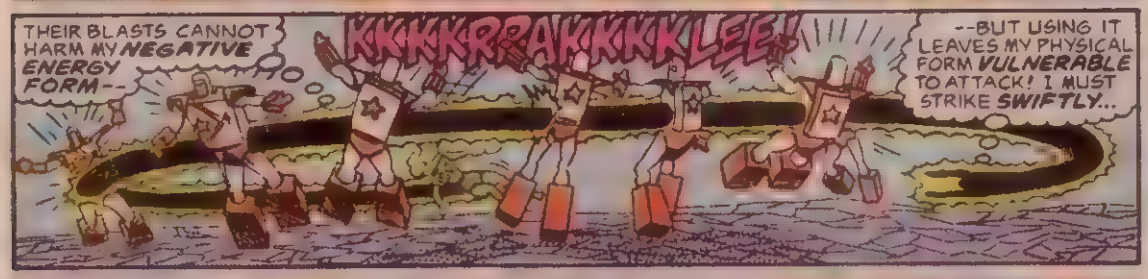
<AGAINST PARTY POLICY.>

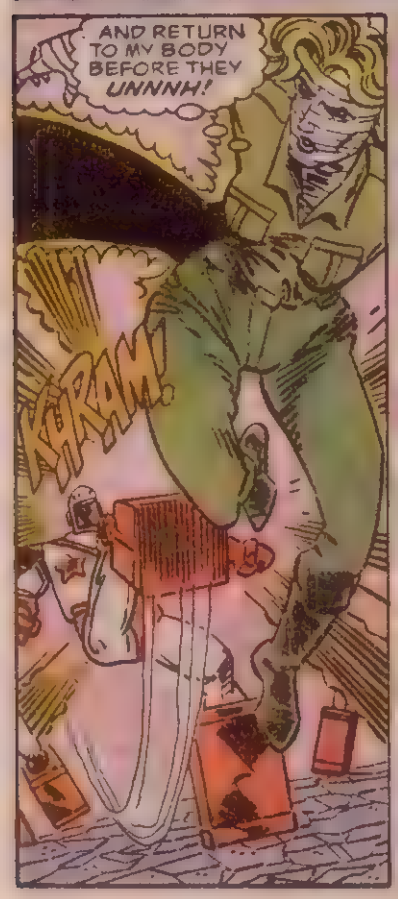
<LEAVING ME TO SHOULDER THE BURDEN OF BLAME ..!>

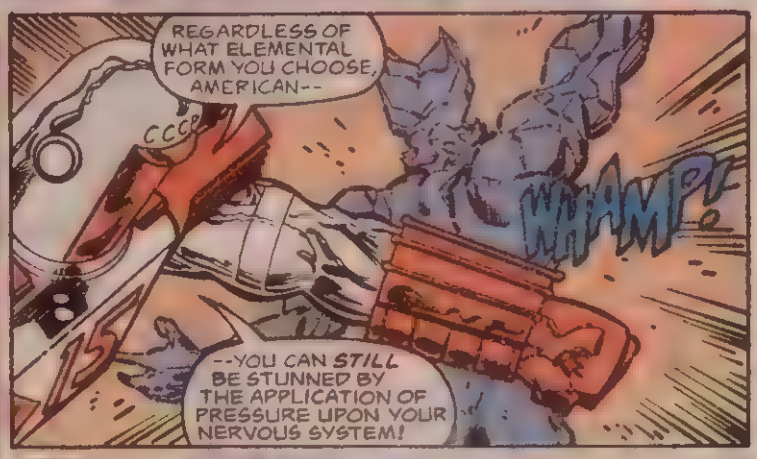
WE AWAIT YOUR ANSWER, AMERICANS! FIVE...
THEY'RE GOING TO KILL US NO MATTER WHAT WE DO... I CAN SEE IT IN THEIR MINDS! THEY'RE ONLY INTERESTED IN TAKING HAWK BACK TO RUSSIA!
ONE NEED NOT BE A TELEPATH TO RECOGNIZE THEIR INTENT, PSI!
I-I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING --!
"FOUR!"
...BUT, WE BLOW THIS AND WE COULD BE STARTIN' WORLD WAR THREE!
"THREE!"
SNARRRLL! THIS TALK IS A WASTE OF FEEDING TIME!
"TWO!"
ZERO! YOUR TIME IS UP, AMERICANS!
--NOW! SQUAD-- DOOM PATROL...I'VE MOMENTARILY DISRUPTED THEIR SYSTEMS WITH A MENTAL BLAST! CAN'T HOLD IT LONG... HIT 'EM!
FLAG, YOU FOOL! WE DO NOT STAND A CHANCE AGAINST...
KARAH'KK!

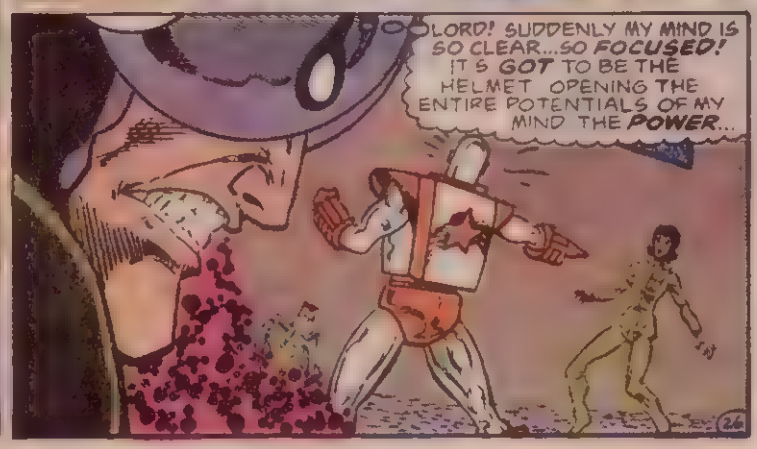

E DO HING
WE ARE OUTNUMBERED AND OUTGUNNED IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY WHAT WEAPONRY THEIR ARMOR CONTAINS!
IT AIN'T CORN-POPPERS, THAT'S FOR SURE...
RRRRLL! TALK IS ASTE OF DING IME!
"TWO!"
ARE YOU IN SUCH A HURRY TO DIE, WEASEL?
"ONE!"
THINKER'S HELMET.
HAVE TO USE THE BLASTED HELMET--
BLAMM!
VREEETT!
VREEETT!
TH-THERE ARE SO MANY OF THEM. TOO MANY MINDS SCREAMING AT ME! I..OOOOHH!
TOO LATE, ARAN--IT'S DONE, SO STOP WHININ' AND HIT 'EM'!
FWAWHOOOOM!


DESIST, ROBOTMAN! YOUR AUTOMATED FORM IS NO MATCH FOR SUPERIOR SOVIET TECHNOLOGY.
WHOOF! NO FLESH IS WORTH PAIN!
OOOFF! YAH GONNA TELL ME ABOUT TRACTOR PRODUCTION TOO?
SKRA-BLAM!


THEIR BLASTS CANNOT HARM MY NEGATIVE ENERGY FORM--
KKKKRRAKKKKLEE!
--BUT USING IT LEAVES MY PHYSICAL FORM VULNERABLE TO ATTACK! I MUST STRIKE SWIFTLY...


AND RETURN TO MY BODY BEFORE THEY UNNNH!
KRAM!

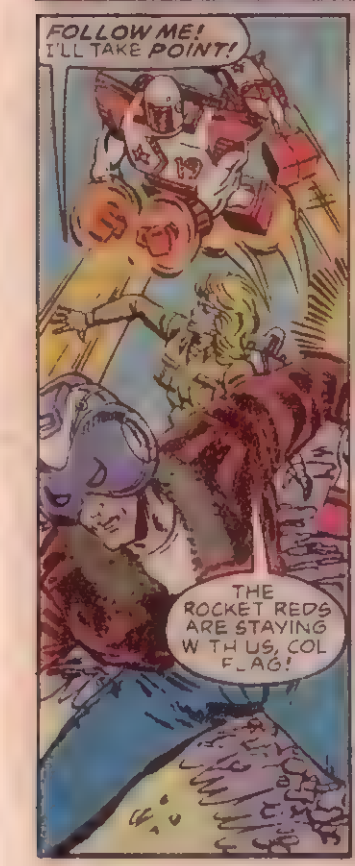

REGARDLESS OF WHAT ELEMENTAL FORM YOU CHOOSE, AMERICAN--
CCCP
WHAMP!
--YOU CAN STILL BE STUNNED BY THE APPLICATION OF PRESSURE UPON YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM!

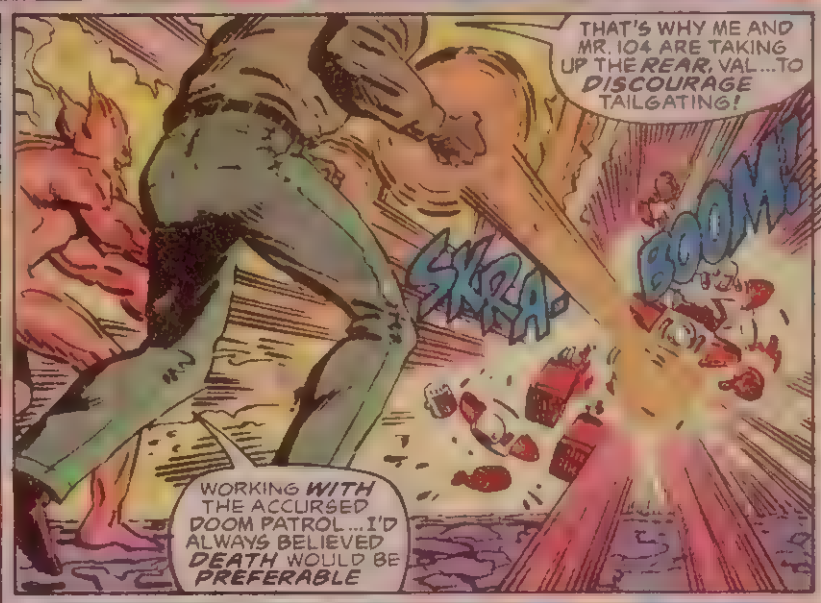

LORD! SUDDENLY MY MIND IS SO CLEAR...SO FOCUSED! IT'S GOT TO BE THE HELMET OPENING THE ENTIRE POTENTIALS OF MY MIND THE POWER...

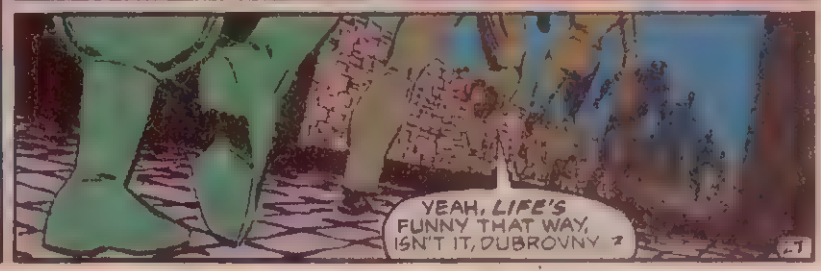
CCCP
SKREEEET!
AIIII! MY, MY MIND...
INCREDIBLE!

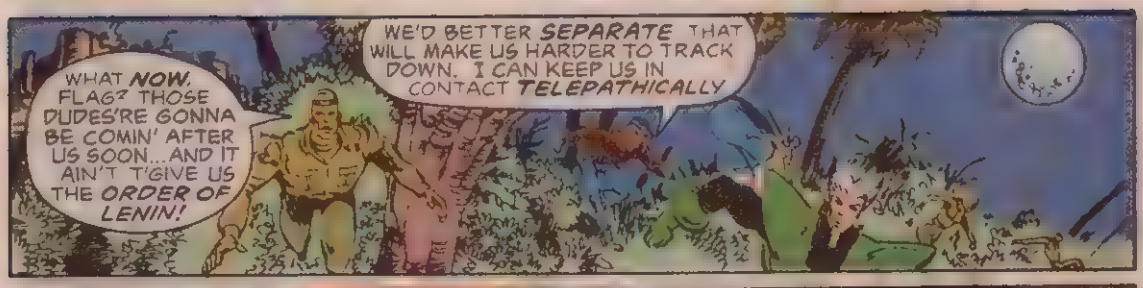
ALL RIGHT, EVERYBODY-- LISTEN UP! WE DON'T STAND A SNOWBALL'S CHANCE AGAINST THE ROCKET REDS AS TH NGS STAND! WE'VE GOT TO RETREAT. MAKE COORDINATED PLANS!

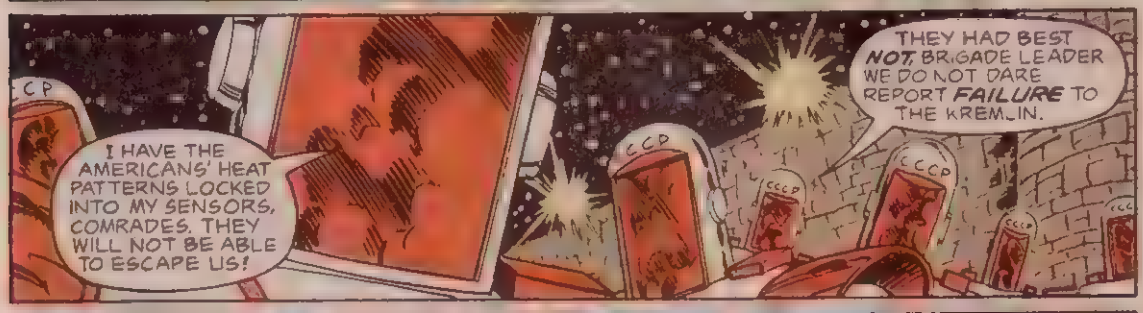
WEASEL'LL BUY T-
I DON'T WANT TO
SOMEONE ELSE'S ME
LIKE THINKER!
YER JUST A SENTIMENTAL OL' PUP, AIN'TCHA SPIKE?

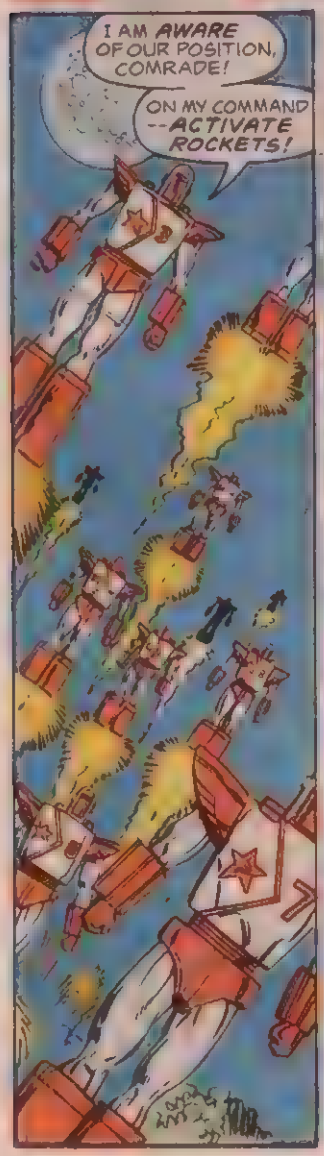

FOLLOW ME! I'LL TAKE POINT!
THE ROCKET REDS ARE STAYING W TH US, COL F_AG!


THAT'S WHY ME AND MR. 104 ARE TAKING UP THE REAR, VAL...TO DISCOURAGE TAILGATING!
SKRAK
BOOM!
WORKING WITH THE ACCURSED DOOM PATROL...I'D ALWAYS BELIEVED DEATH WOULD BE PREFERABLE

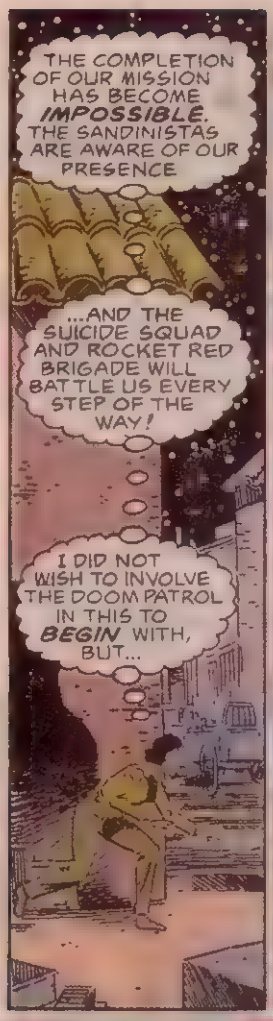

YEAH, LIFE'S FUNNY THAT WAY, ISN'T IT, DUBROVNY?

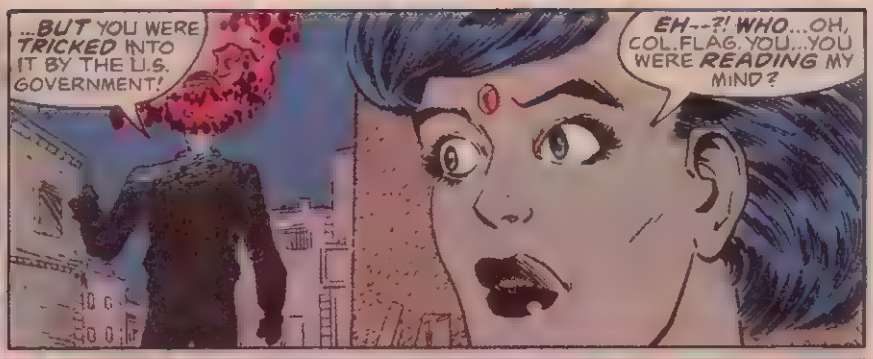

WHAT NOW, FLAG? THOSE DUDES'RE GONNA BE COMIN' AFTER US SOON...AND IT AIN'T T'GIVE US THE ORDER OF LENIN!
WE'D BETTER SEPARATE THAT WILL MAKE US HARDER TO TRACK DOWN. I CAN KEEP US IN CONTACT TELEPATHICALLY

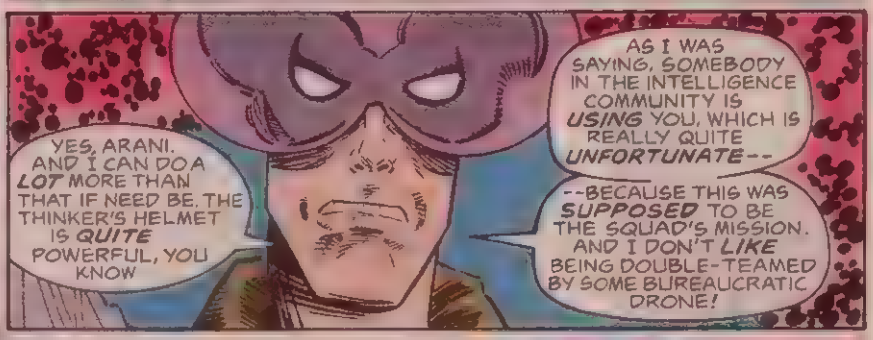

I HAVE THE AMERICANS' HEAT PATTERNS LOCKED INTO MY SENSORS, COMRADES. THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ESCAPE US!
THEY HAD BEST NOT, BRIGADE LEADER WE DO NOT DARE REPORT FAILURE TO THE KREMLIN.

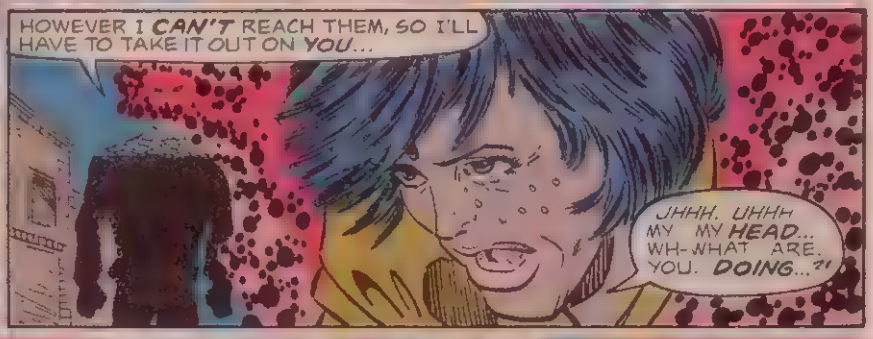

I AM AWARE OF OUR POSITION, COMRADE!
ON MY COMMAND --ACTIVATE ROCKETS!

HMMM. SO

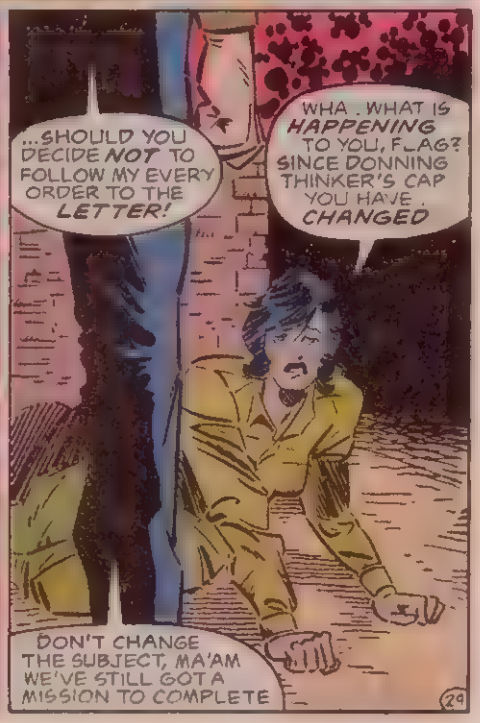

THE COMPLETION OF OUR MISSION HAS BECOME IMPOSSIBLE. THE SANDINISTAS ARE AWARE OF OUR PRESENCE
...AND THE SUICIDE SQUAD AND ROCKET RED BRIGADE WILL BATTLE US EVERY STEP OF THE WAY!
I DID NOT WISH TO INVOLVE THE DOOM PATROL IN THIS TO BEGIN WITH, BUT...


...BUT YOU WERE TRICKED INTO IT BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT!
EH--?! WHO...OH, COL. FLAG. YOU...YOU WERE READING MY MIND?


YES, ARANI. AND I CAN DO A LOT MORE THAN THAT IF NEED BE. THE THINKER'S HELMET IS QUITE POWERFUL, YOU KNOW
AS I WAS SAYING, SOMEBODY IN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY IS USING YOU, WHICH IS REALLY QUITE UNFORTUNATE--
--BECAUSE THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE SQUAD'S MISSION. AND I DON'T LIKE BEING DOUBLE-TEAMED BY SOME BUREAUCRATIC DRONE!

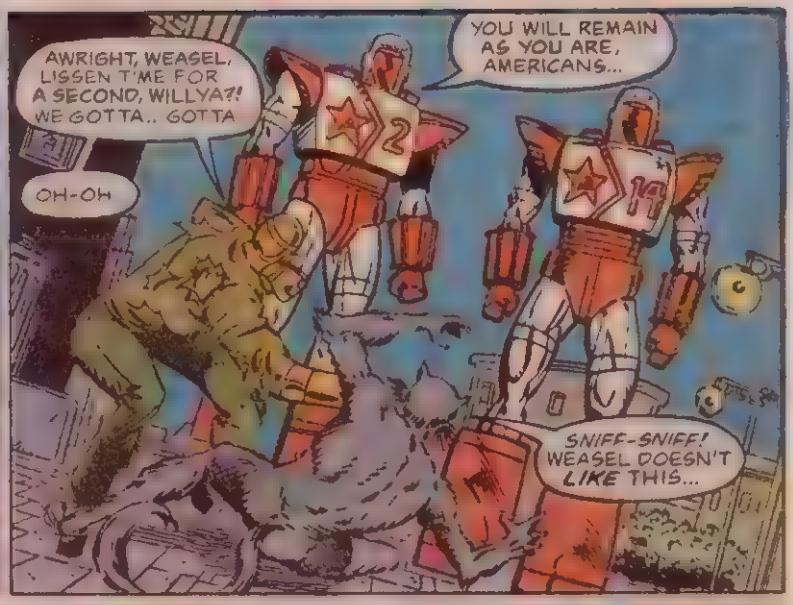

HOWEVER I CAN'T REACH THEM, SO I'LL HAVE TO TAKE IT OUT ON YOU...
UHHH. UHHH MY MY HEAD... WH-WHAT ARE YOU. DOING...?!

MERELY SHORT-CIRCUITING A FEW SYNAPSES IN YOUR BRAIN
THINK OF IT AS A MERE TASTE OF THINGS TO COME, ARANI CAULDER
AAAAIIIIIEEEE!

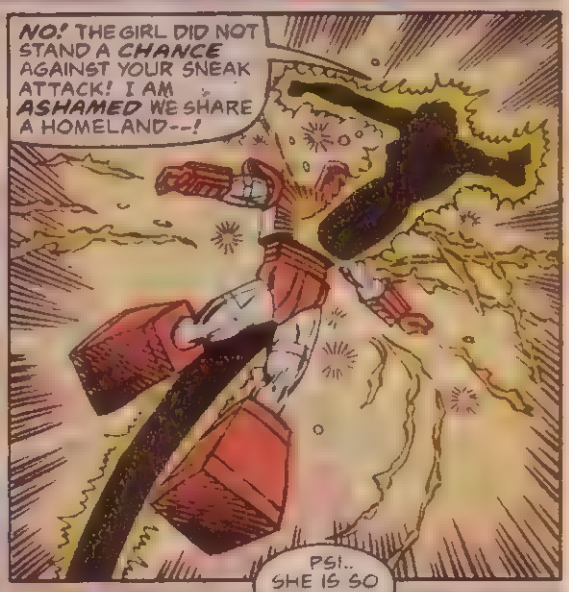

...SHOULD YOU DECIDE NOT TO FOLLOW MY EVERY ORDER TO THE LETTER!
WHA . WHAT IS HAPPENING TO YOU, FLAG? SINCE DONNING THINKER'S CAP YOU HAVE CHANGED
DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT, MA'AM WE'VE STILL GOT A MISSION TO COMPLETE

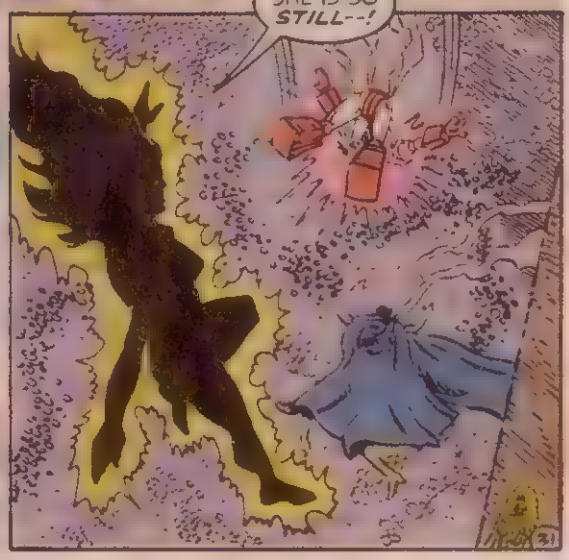
THAT IS MADNESS! OUR ONLY HOPE FOR SURVIVAL IS TO ABANDON OUR OUR OHHH
UNACCEPTABLE! MY ORDERS COME DIRECTLY FROM THE PRESIDENT!
SO IF YOU WON'T COOPERATE VOLUNTARILY--
--I'LL JUST HAVE TO TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ENTIRE BODY!
NOW COME ALONG, MRS CAULDER. WE HAVE A JOB TO DO.
THIS TEARS IT! I'M GONNA FIND THE OTHERS AND SEE WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT HAULIN' OUR CANS OUTTA THIS STINKIN' BURG!
THE SANDINISTAS ARE GONNA PROBABLY TAKE HAWK AN' HIDE 'IM OUT SO DEEP NONE'A US'RE EVER GONNA BE ABLE TO FIND HIM!
AHHHHH!
FLESSSHH!
OH, FER CRYIN' OUT LOUD!
GRRRR! ROBOTMAN--?!? ANOTHER CANNED MEAT... WHEN IS WEASEL GONNA FIND REAL FLESH!?
YO, MAN, YOU'RE SCRATCHIN' THE SIMONIZE. AND ONE MORE THING, ROVER--

--DON'T CALL ME ROBOTMAN NO MORE!
AHNE'
WHUMP!


AWRIGHT, WEASEL, LISSEN T'ME FOR A SECOND, WILLYA?! WE GOTTA.. GOTTA
OH-OH
YOU WILL REMAIN AS YOU ARE, AMERICANS...
SNIFF-SNIFF! WEASEL DOESN'T LIKE THIS...

SHASSSHBLAMM!
THAT SOUND... A ROCKET RED! I...I AM STILL DAZED FROM THAT LAST BLOW...CANNOT CONCENTRATE TO OOOOHH!


NO! THE GIRL DID NOT STAND A CHANCE AGAINST YOUR SNEAK ATTACK! I AM ASHAMED WE SHARE A HOMELAND--!


PSI.. SHE IS SO STILL--!

SHE TOOK THE FULL BRUNT OF THAT BLAST. SHE IS SUCH AN INNOCENT...
I CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHAT SHE IS DOING INVOLVED WITH THE VILLAINS OF COL. FLAG'S SQUAD. WAIT...SHE IS STILL BREATHING!
THANK GOODNESS
NOW ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR ME TO GET US BOTH TO SAFETY... FIND THE PATROL....AND SEE ABOUT OUR GETTING OUT OF NICARAGUA ALIVE.
DA. THAT IS ALL...
--ONLY IT'S GOING TO TAKE MORE THAN A FLEA BATH TO GET THEM OFF MY BACK! AND I CAN'T JUST KEEP BLASTING AWAY AT THEM EITHER!
SKREEET!
KA-BLAM!
TH S STINKS! THESE GUYS ARE ON ME LIKE FLEAS ON THE WEASEL--
BLAMM!
THE BIO-ENERGY THAT POWERS MY BLASTS ONLY GOES SO FAR WITHOUT AN ULTRA-VIOLET RECHARGING FROM THE SUN .. AND IT'S HOURS TILL DAWN!
THERE HE IS!
BEHIND YOU, TEMPEST!
WHA ?! OH, CRUDE-- I'VE GOT TO DEAL WITH YOU TOO, DUBROVNY?!
SKRARKTT!
YOU'VE GOT ME ALL WRONG, TEMPEST! I WANT TO BE ON YOUR SIDE...WATCH OUT!
I SEE HIM. OKAY, MISTER, WHAT'S THE ANGLE?

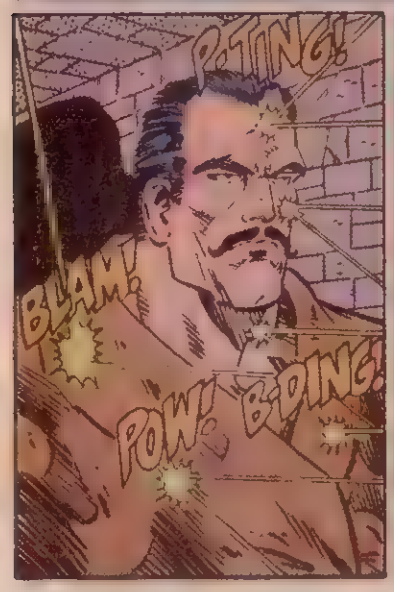
IT'S ACTUALLY RATHER STRAIGHT FORWARD. I LIKE YOU, TEMPEST. YOU'RE NOT ON SOME SUICIDAL BENT LIKE THE OTHERS, AND WE WORK WELL TOGETHER
I HADN'T NOTICED.

YES, SIR, I THINK YOU AND I TOGETHER STAND AN EXCELLENT CHANCE OF GETTING OUT OF THIS BACKWATER MOSQUITO TRAP OF A COUNTRY ALIVE.
I'VE GOT TO FIND THE REST OF THE PATROL ...AND LOSE THIS PSYCHO, PREFERABLY SOMEPLACE DANGEROUS...!

‹HALT! NO ONE IS ALLOWED NEAR THE PRISONER!›
‹I AM WARNING YOU...DO NOT COME ANY CLOSER!›

‹I . I WILL NOT TELL YOU AGAIN! STAY BACK!›

‹FOOL! YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE--!›
RAT-A-TAT-A


PING!
BLAM!
POW!
BONG!

YOU ANNOY ME, LITTLE MAN
AHHRKK!

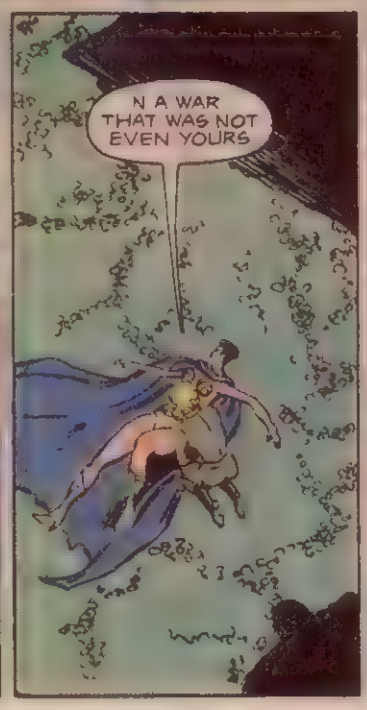
YOU ARE NOT A FOE WORTHY OF MY ABILITIES...
GRRRGGLE!

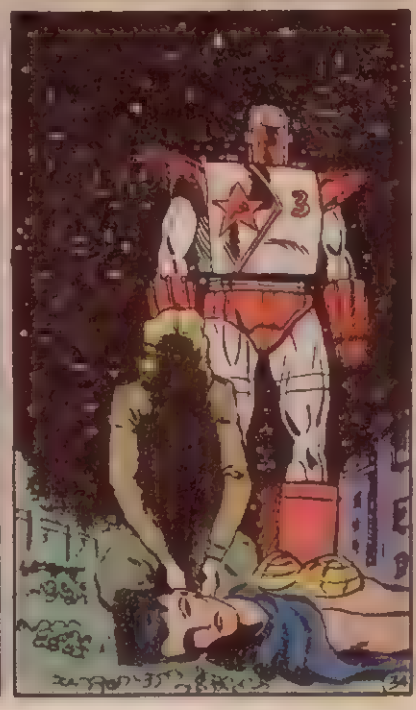
SNAP!

YOU TOO EASILY LOSE YOUR HEAD

I...I FEEL IT... MY ENERGY.. SE-SEEPING SEEPING AWAY
HUSH, CHILD. EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE. WE WILL FIND A DOCTOR TO...
IT'S TOO.. TOO LATE FOR TH-THAT.. BUT I I REMEMBER, COL VOSTOK M-MY NAME IS GAYLE MARSH ...I CAN SEE THEM .. MY FAMILY.. OH, GOD.. MOTHER FATHER

HOW...COULD I I FOR
FORGET
YO-
PSI .. GAYLE! YOU CAN NOT DIE, GAYLE...NOT HERE, NOT LIKE THIS...


N A WAR THAT WAS NOT EVEN YOURS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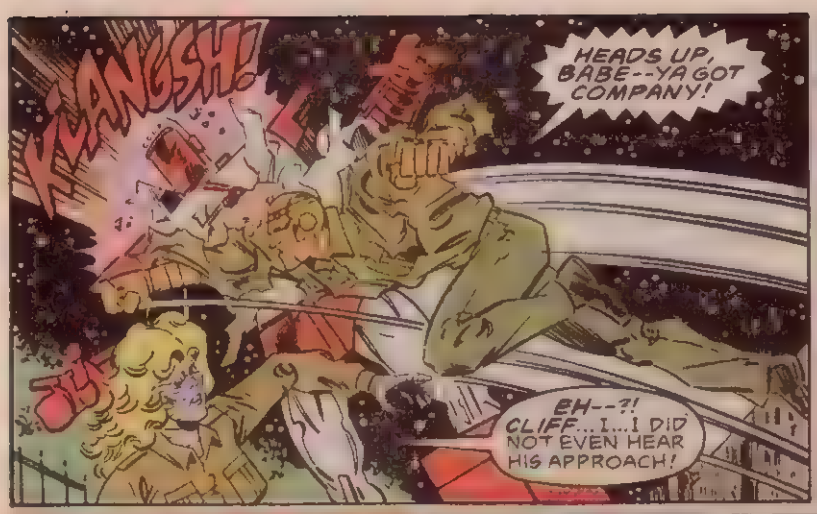
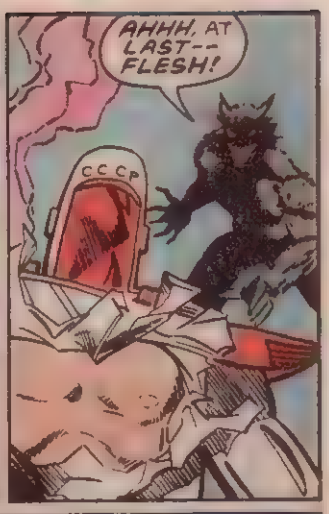
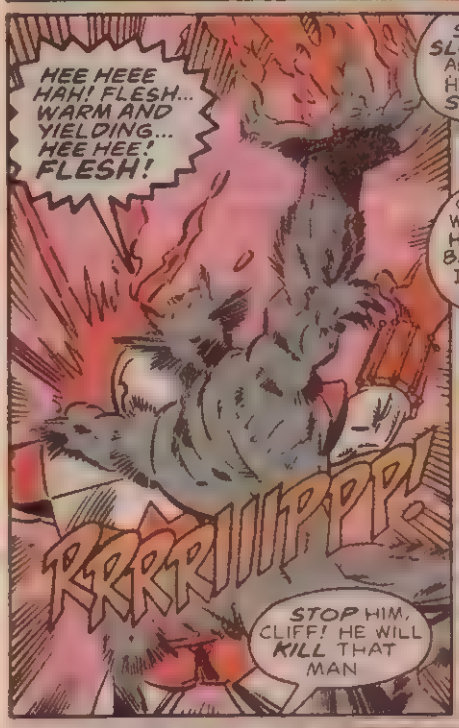
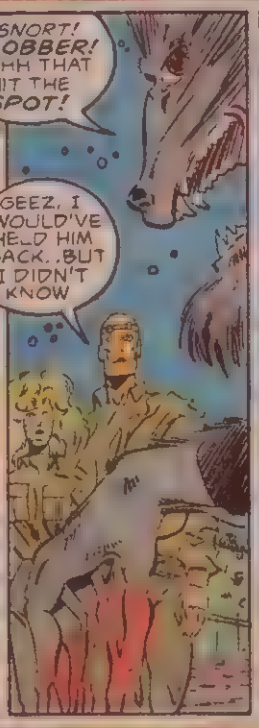

KLANGSH!
HEADS UP, BABE--YA GOT COMPANY!
EH--?! CLIFF... I...I DID NOT EVEN HEAR HIS APPROACH!

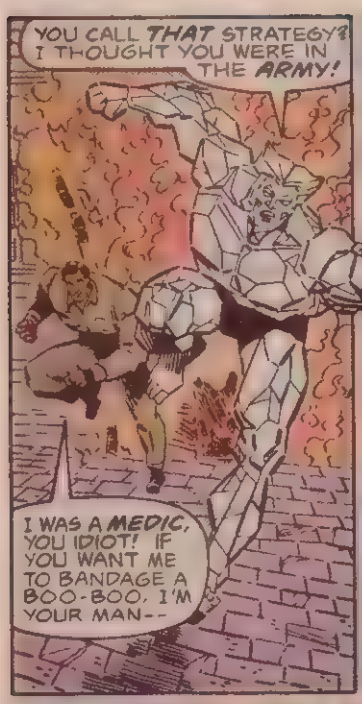

AHHH, AT LAST--FLESH!
CC CP

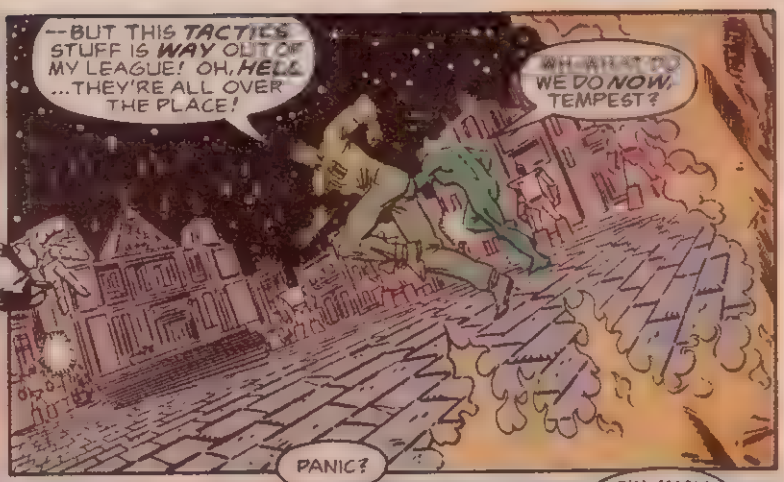

HEE HEEE HAH! FLESH... WARM AND YIELDING... HEE HEE! FLESH!
RRRRIIIPPP!
STOP HIM, CLIFF! HE WILL KILL THAT MAN

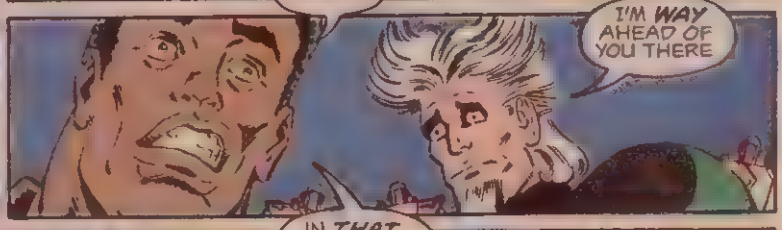

SNORT! SLOBBER! AHH THAT HIT THE SPOT!
GEEZ, I WOULD'VE HELD HIM BACK. .BUT I DIDN'T KNOW

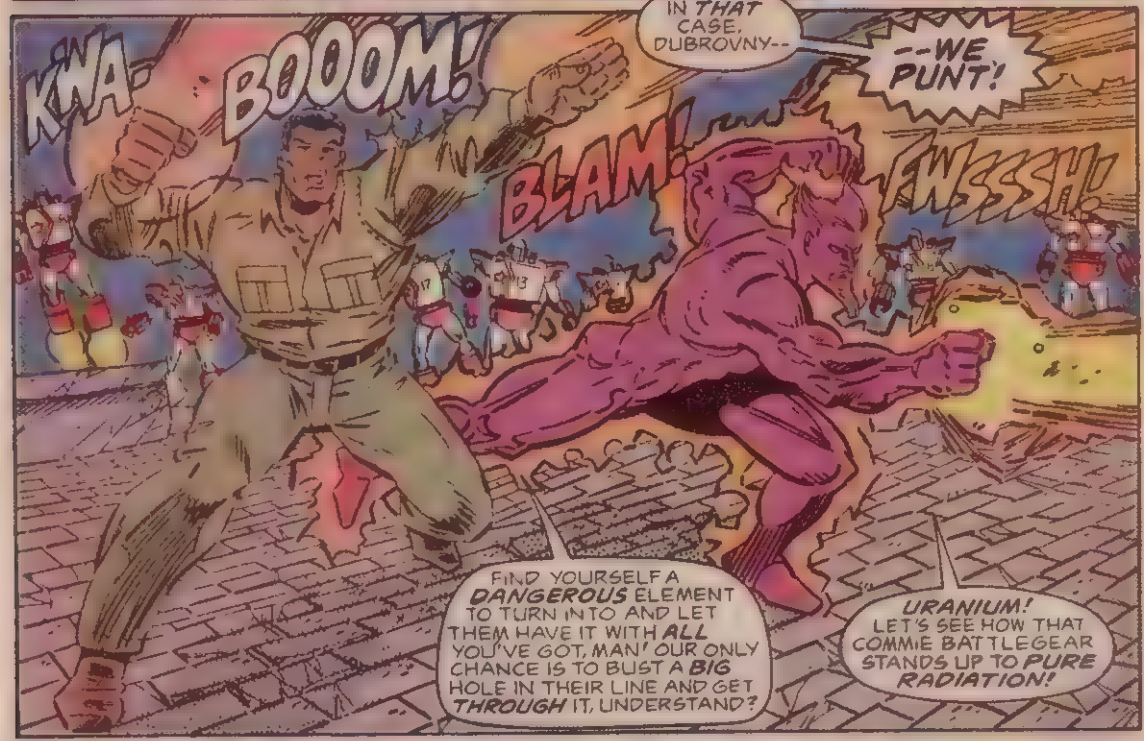
GRRR! MORE CANNED FLESH COMING!
LET'S GO, VAL! WE'LL WORRY 'BOUT WHAT T'DO WITH WEASEL LATER
IF THERE IS A LATER..

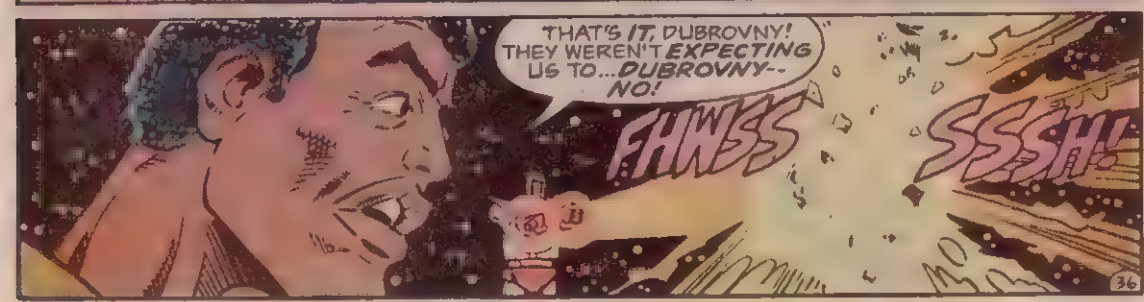
THIS WAS A GREAT IDEA TEMPEST. THE RUSSIANS ARE GOING RIGHT PAST US. ONCE THEY'RE GONE WE CAN DOUBLE BACK AND.
HEY!
SOMEBODY'S SET THE PLACE ON FIRE! THERE MUST BE MORE OF THEM OUT BACK..
...TRYING TO BURN US OUT!


YOU CALL THAT STRATEGY? I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN THE ARMY!
I WAS A MEDIC, YOU IDIOT! IF YOU WANT ME TO BANDAGE A BOO-BOO, I'M YOUR MAN--


--BUT THIS TACTICS STUFF IS WAY OUT OF MY LEAGUE! OH, HELL ...THEY'RE ALL OVER THE PLACE!
WHAT DO WE DO NOW, TEMPEST?

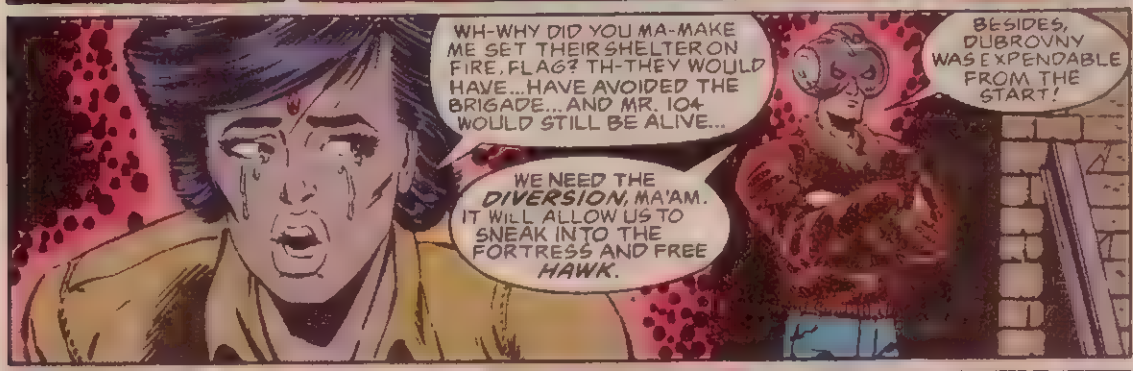

PANIC?
I'M WAY AHEAD OF YOU THERE

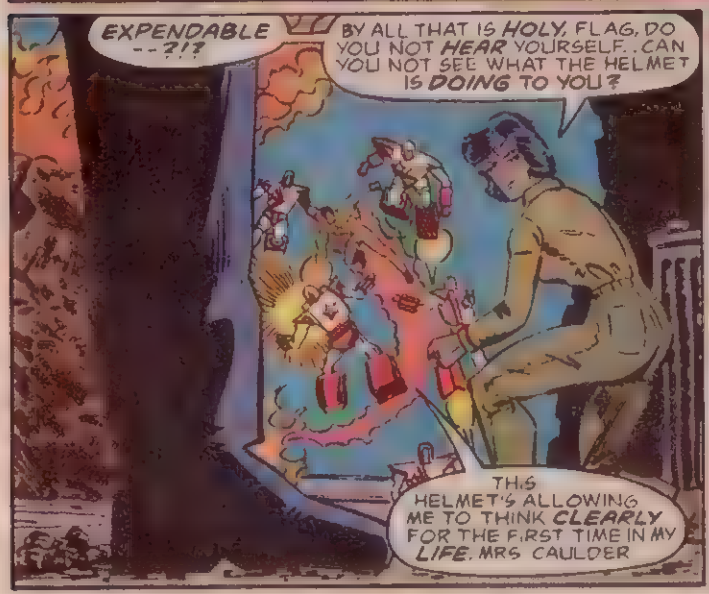

KWA-
BOOOM!
IN THAT CASE, DUBROVNY--
--WE PUNT!
BLAM!
WSSSH!
FIND YOURSELF A DANGEROUS ELEMENT TO TURN INTO AND LET THEM HAVE IT WITH ALL YOU'VE GOT, MAN! OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO BUST A BIG HOLE IN THEIR LINE AND GET THROUGH IT, UNDERSTAND?
URANIUM! LET'S SEE HOW THAT COMMIE BATTLEGEAR STANDS UP TO PURE RADIATION!

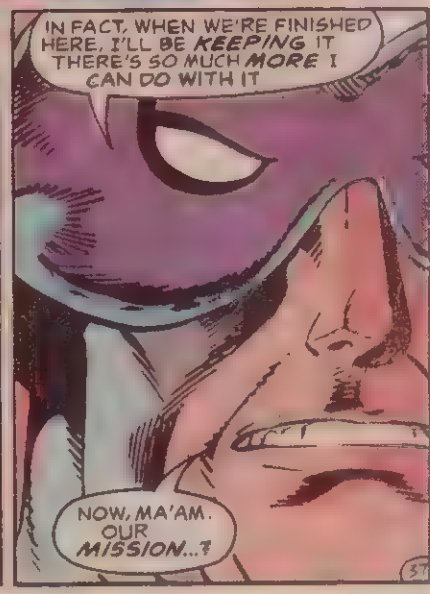

THAT'S IT, DUBROVNY! THEY WEREN'T EXPECTING US TO...DUBROVNY-- NO!
FHWSS
SSSH!

YOU... YOU MURDERING SCUM...!
YOU KILLED HIM... HE WAS A KILLER HIMSELF

...BUT HE WASN'T A DAMN SOLDIER AND HE NEVER ASKED TO BE HERE--NONE OF US DID!
BUT NOW THAT I AM HERE, YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR HIS DEATH. AND PAY HARD!
KRAK-A-
WHOOOOM!


WH-WHY DID YOU MA-MAKE ME SET THEIR SHELTER ON FIRE, FLAG? TH-THEY WOULD HAVE... HAVE AVOIDED THE BRIGADE... AND MR. 104 WOULD STILL BE ALIVE...
WE NEED THE DIVERSION, MA'AM. IT WILL ALLOW US TO SNEAK INTO THE FORTRESS AND FREE HAWK.
BESIDES, DUBROVNY WAS EXPENDABLE FROM THE START!

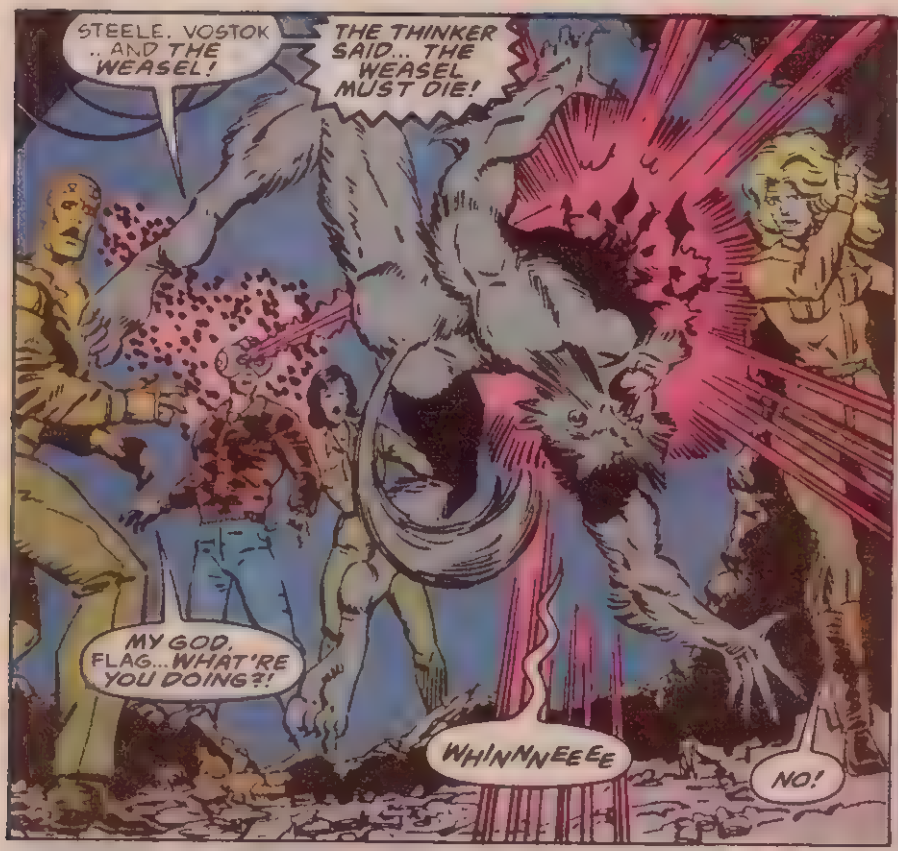

EXPENDABLE --?!?
BY ALL THAT IS HOLY, FLAG, DO YOU NOT HEAR YOURSELF.. CAN YOU NOT SEE WHAT THE HELMET IS DOING TO YOU?
THIS HELMET'S ALLOWING ME TO THINK CLEARLY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE. MRS CAULDER


IN FACT, WHEN WE'RE FINISHED HERE, I'LL BE KEEPING IT THERE'S SO MUCH MORE I CAN DO WITH IT
NOW, MA'AM. OUR MISSION...?

OKAY, SO MAYBE HELPING TO RUN SOME GUNS TO THE CONTRAS WASN'T THE BRIGHTEST IDEA I EVER HAD. MAYBE DAD WAS RIGHT AND I SHOULD GO BACK TO SCHOOL...HUH? WHAT'S THAT?
I COULD'VE SWORN I HEARD SOMETHING IN THE
KHRAMM!
UHHHH...
HI. CAN I, LIKE, HELP YOU... OR SOMETHING?
HELLO... ANYBODY IN THERE?
HEY--MONGO! AREN'T YOU GONNA ANSWER ME?
BASSH!
POW!
CRASH!

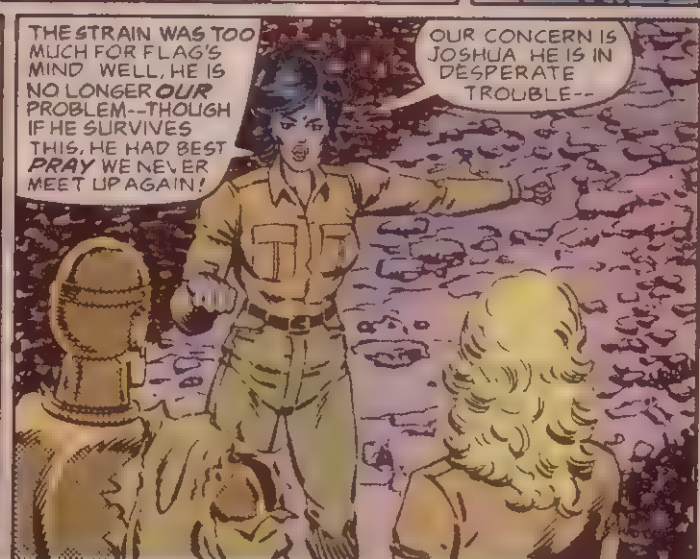
WOW!
YOU DON'T SAY A LOT, BUT YOU SURE GOT A WAY OF PUTTING THINGS!
KRUNNCH!
LISTEN, IF THIS'S A RESCUE MISSION, I WANT TO KNOW WHO THE...UHRKK!
GHAHHHG!
RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-A-TAT
LE...LE.. LEMME... GHAGG!.. GO...!
THOOOM!
NO NO! WAITAMINNIT... I CHANGED MY..
...NNNNOOOOO...

RAT-A-TAT
TAT-TAT-TAT-A
SKRUNCH!
KLATTER!
SKRAKT!
PTING!
I MUST BE GETTING OLD...
HURRY ALONG, MRS. CAULDER. WE STILL HAVE A LOT TO DO BEFORE WE QUIT THIS COUNTRY
IT IT IS NOT TOO LATE, FLAG! YOU CAN STILL REMOVE THE THINKER'S CAP AND BE .BE ARRRGH!
I TOLD YOU I DID NOT WISH TO HEAR IT!
HEY--THERE'S FLAG! FLAG--WE'RE OVER HERE!
SNIFF-SNIFF! WEASEL SAYS LET HIM GO WE'RE DOING FINE BY OURSELVES!

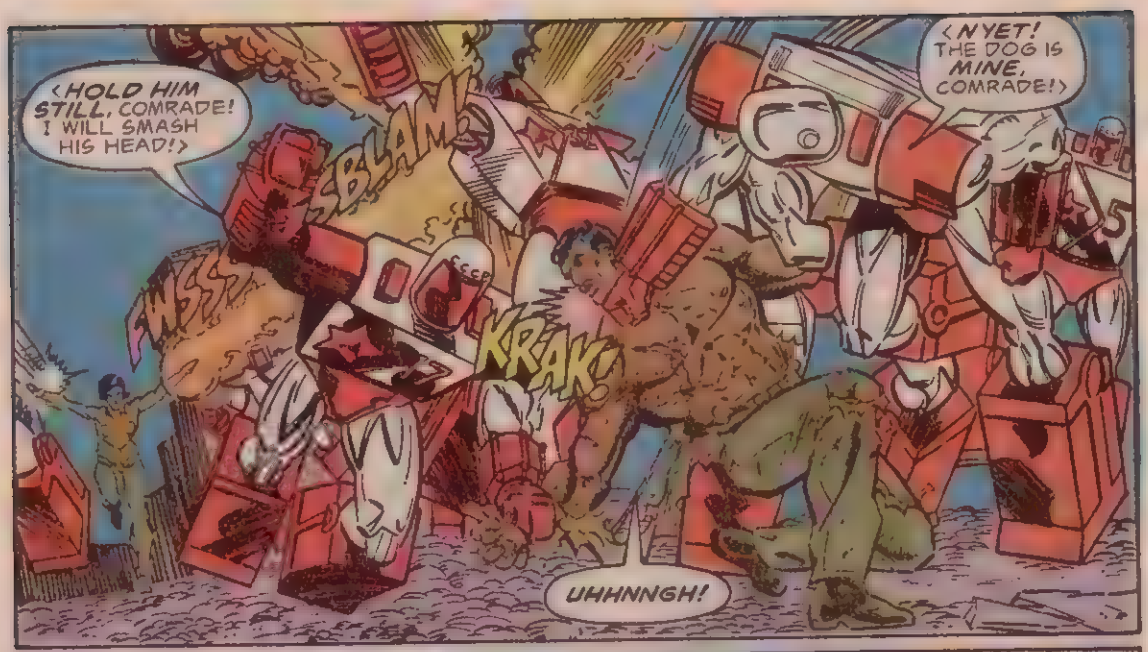

STEELE, VOSTOK .. AND THE WEASEL!
THE THINKER SAID... THE WEASEL MUST DIE!
MY GOD, FLAG... WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!
WHINNNEEEE
NO!

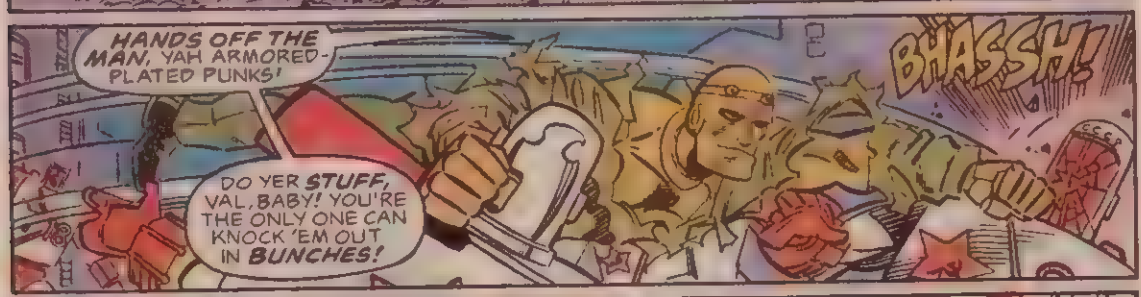
I, I COULDN'T STOP IT IT WAS LIKE IT WAS IN IN THE HELMET IT WAS THE THINKER, DAMN HIM THE THINKER'S LAST WISH!

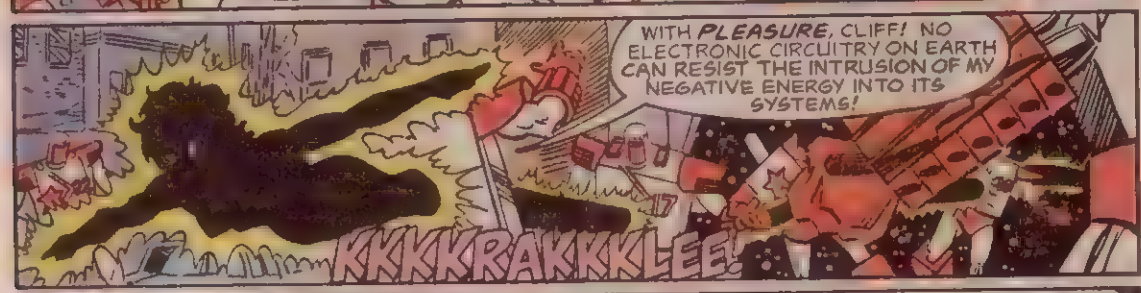
MY MIND IS FREE! I PROMISED YOU WOULD PAY FOR
I COULDN'T... THE CAP... IT... OOOOHHH...

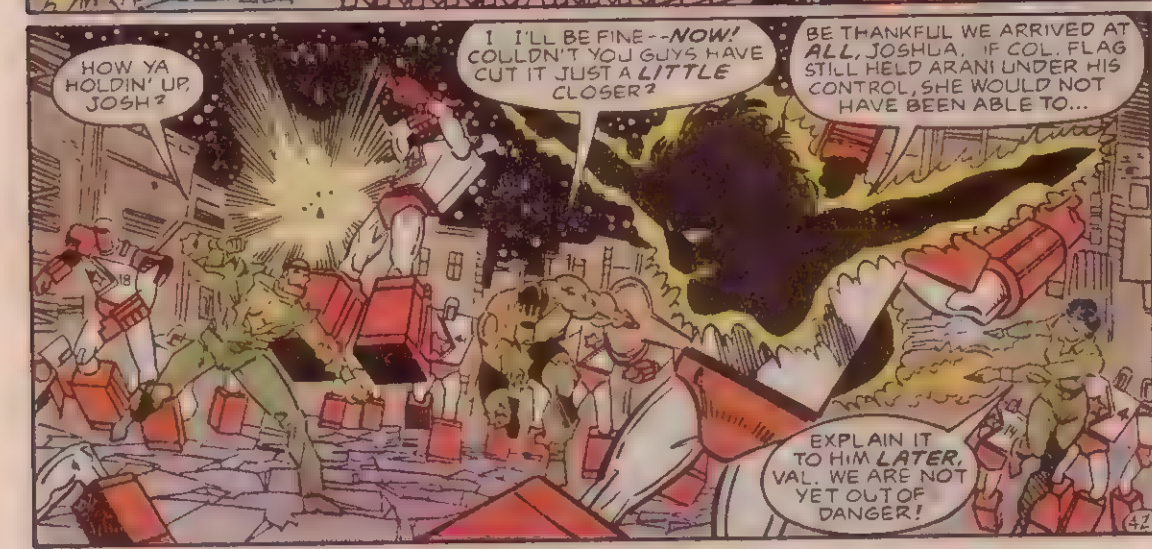

THE STRAIN WAS TOO MUCH FOR FLAG'S MIND WELL, HE IS NO LONGER OUR PROBLEM--THOUGH IF HE SURVIVES THIS, HE HAD BEST PRAY WE NEVER MEET UP AGAIN!
OUR CONCERN IS JOSHUA HE IS IN DESPERATE TROUBLE--

--AND THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN... AND THE DEVIL TAKE THE REST OF THEM!
LEAD ON, 'RANI!


<HOLD HIM STILL, COMRADE! I WILL SMASH HIS HEAD!>
<NYET! THE DOG IS MINE, COMRADE!>
BLAM
KRAK
UHHNNGH!

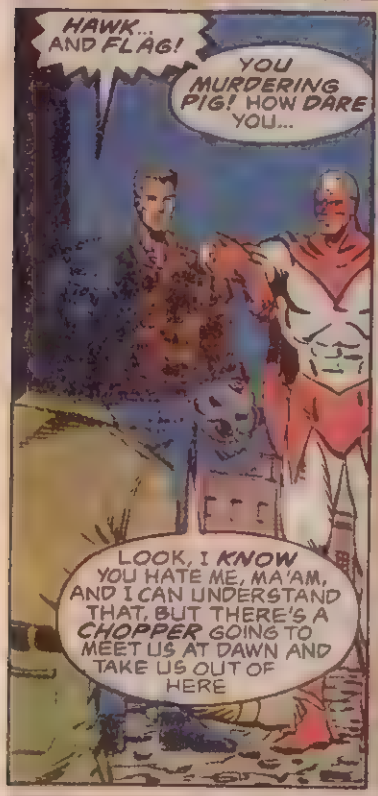

HANDS OFF THE MAN, YAH ARMORED-PLATED PUNKS!
DO YER STUFF, VAL, BABY! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE CAN KNOCK 'EM OUT IN BUNCHES!
BHASSH!


WITH PLEASURE, CLIFF! NO ELECTRONIC CIRCUITRY ON EARTH CAN RESIST THE INTRUSION OF MY NEGATIVE ENERGY INTO ITS SYSTEMS!
KKKKRAKKKLEE!


HOW YA HOLDIN' UP, JOSH?
I I'LL BE FINE--NOW! COULDN'T YOU GUYS HAVE CUT IT JUST A LITTLE CLOSER?
BE THANKFUL WE ARRIVED AT ALL, JOSHUA. IF COL. FLAG STILL HELD ARANI UNDER HIS CONTROL, SHE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO...
EXPLAIN IT TO HIM LATER, VAL. WE ARE NOT YET OUT OF DANGER!

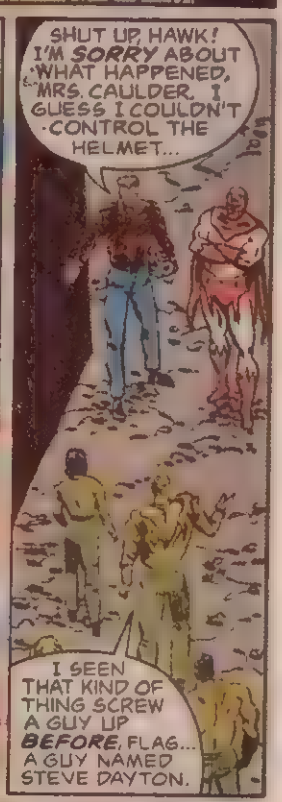
I BLASTED THAT WALL DOWN ON TOP OF THE SURVIVING ROCKET REDS, BUT IT PROBABLY WON'T TAKE THEM LONG TO DIG THEIR WAY OUT!
THEN LET'S MAKE SURE WE AIN'T STILL HERE WHEN THEY DO!

WHERE TO NOW, ARANI?
YEAH WE CAN'T EXACTLY BOOGIE OVER T'THE AIRPORT AND BOOK SEATS OUTTA HERE?
GIVE ME A MOMENT, CLIFFORD I.
WHY DON'T YOU COME WITH US? I'VE GOT THE ROOM


HAWK... AND FLAG!
YOU MURDERING PIG! HOW DARE YOU...
LOOK, I KNOW YOU HATE ME, MA'AM, AND I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT, BUT THERE'S A CHOPPER GOING TO MEET US AT DAWN AND TAKE US OUT OF HERE

I WOULD RATHER DIE FIRST, MONSTER! YOU INVADED MY MIND... MADE ME PARTY TO YOUR INSANITY AND MURDER! I...
COOL IT, 'RANI! WE NEED OUTTA HERE AND HE'S OFFERIN' US A LOT BETTER'N HAVIN' T'WALK BACK T'KANSAS CITY.

WHAT'S THE RUSH? BESIDES, I STILL WANT TO FIND THE HUMONGOID WHO "RESCUED" ME!
GUY NEARLY KILLED ME. I WANT TO RETURN THE FAVOR!


SHUT UP, HAWK! I'M SORRY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED, MRS. CAULDER. I GUESS I COULDN'T CONTROL THE HELMET...
I SEEN THAT KIND OF THING SCREW A GUY UP BEFORE, FLAG... A GUY NAMED STEVE DAYTON.

MENTO? I'VE HEARD OF HIM... I CAN SEE HOW EASY IT IS TO BE SEDUCED BY ALL THIS POWER.
BUT IT'LL ONLY TAKE OVER IF I PUT IT ON AGA'N AND THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN. NOW, LET'S MOVE OUT.

EPILOGUE...

THERE WAS ROOM FOR MYSELF, HAWK, AND THE *SUICIDE SQUAD*... BUT FOUR OF THEM WON'T BE GOING HOME.

I KNOW THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE BAD GUYS, BUT THEY DIED IN A WAR... I ALWAYS HATE LEAVING MY DEAD BEHIND ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

<I EXPECTED YOU LONG AGO, COMRADE *STALNOIVOLK* I TRUST YOUR MISSION WAS SUCCESSFUL?>

<*EXACTLY* AS PLANNED, COMRADE MAJOR>

<MY ONLY REGRET IS THAT I WAS NOT PERMITTED TO *KILL* THE AMERICAN.>

<HMMM. YES, WELL, PERHAPS *NEXT* TIME, MY FRIEND. FOR NOW, WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED OUR GOAL-- *TARNISHING* THE STERLING REPUTATION. OF THE *ROCKET RED BRIGADE*.>

<WE NEED TO INSTILL THEIR HEROIC NATURE INTO *EVERY* CITIZEN OF THE SOVIET UNION, NOT RELY UPON A SMALL NUMBER OF *SPECIALISTS!* IT MAKES THE POPULACE *COMPLACENT*...>

<BUT THE POLITICIANS DO NOT SEE THE *DANGER* OF ALLOWING THE MOTHERLAND TO BECOME DEPENDENT ON ANY *ONE* PERSON OR THING FOR ITS SECURITY.>

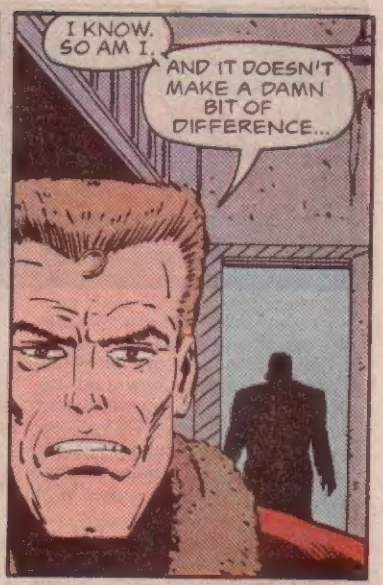
<SUCH AS *MYSELF*.>

<*PRECISELY* SUCH AS YOURSELF, COMRADE STALNOIVOLK.>

<AH, WELL AT LEAST IT PROMISES FOR AN *INTERESTING* FUTURE...>

DAY FIVE. BELLE REVE FEDERAL PRISON. 12:15 PM, CST.
I'VE READ YOUR REPORT, COL. FLAG. IT WASN'T EXACTLY THE TYPE OF MISSION I ENVISIONED FOR THE SQUAD WHEN I CREATED IT.
WE BROUGHT HAWK OUT, DIDN'T WE?
YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN SENT AFTER HIM TO BEGIN WITH.

I MEANT WHAT I SAID WHEN YOU HANDED US THIS MISSION, MRS. WALLER--I HAD MY ORDERS, I DID MY JOB.
DAMN IT, FLAG. YOU'RE NOT MAKING THIS EASY FOR ME.
I'M TRYING TO SAY I'M SORRY IT TURNED OUT AS IT...


I KNOW. SO AM I.
AND IT DOESN'T MAKE A DAMN BIT OF DIFFERENCE...

THE KREMLIN. THE RUSSIAN SOVIET FEDERATED SOCIALIST REPUBLIC. 6:15 PM, GMT.
<ZASTROW! I HAD HEARD OF YOUR RETURN... AND THE FAILURE OF YOUR MISSION!>
<OUR MISSION, NO, COMRADE MAJOR? YOUR ROCKET REDS ALSO FAILED TO SECURE THE AMERICAN.>

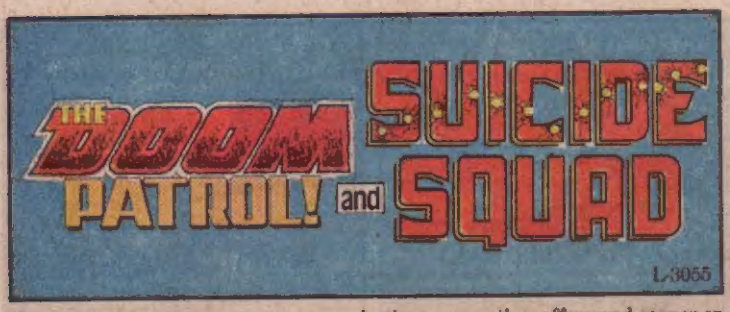
<BUT THAT WAS YOUR PLAN ALL ALONG, WASN'T IT, MY FRIEND! BRINGING HAWK TO RUSSIA WOULD HAVE BEEN AN ACHIEVEMENT, BUT A MINOR ONE, DON'T YOU AGREE?>
<OH, YES. IN THE LARGER PICTURE, IT WAS RELATIVELY INCONSEQUENTIAL.>

<BUT AS A POLITICAL MOVE TO DISGRACE ME-->>

<--IT WAS A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO SEIZE MORE POWER... RUIN ME WITH THE CHAIRMAN! I WON'T ALLOW IT, ZASTROW! I'LL...UNNNGHH!>

<YOUR ANALYSIS OF MY MOTIVES ARE QUITE ACCURATE, COMRADE MAJOR, THOUGH YOU NEGLECT TO TAKE ONE BIT OF DATA INTO CONSIDERATION-->
BLAMM!

<I AM THE FAR BETTER POLITICIAN OF THE TWO OF US...>
END



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Ever wonder just how something as odd as this publication comes together? You have heard about this team-up for months now and the question must have crossed your mind at least a few times: "Why Doom Patrol and Suicide Squad? Why not The Outsiders and Justice League International? Or Firestorm and Wild Dog?"

Sit back and we'll tell you a story.

When publishing every month, you expect everything to work within reasonable limits. Your writer, penciller, letterer, inker and colorist should deliver their work every 30 days and the postal service should manage to deliver it overnight. And then you rely on the speed of our crack Production Department to help make up for some lost time (more often than not, there's lost time) and then cross your fingers that there isn't a backlog at the color separator.

Baring a strike or snowbound roads, the truckers can then carry the comics on time to comic shops around the country—or, a few weeks later, to local newsstand outlets and bookstores.

But, you should ask, what would happen if something went wrong?

Well, we'd go to Plan B. Every good editor should have a Plan B. Depending upon what the problem is exactly and how much time can be lost, you vary Plan B. For example, the inker breaks his arm and can't finish the job until three weeks from now. But, the book is due to the color separator in two weeks and we're already running late. The later he is in inking this month's comic, the less time he has to ink next month's issue. Plan B, in that case, might be to get another inker to do the following issue and pray you get this one out on time.

However, in some cases, you just can't patch the problem with just substituting one person or even two. Sometimes, just to get the book back on track or buy time when changing personnel, you run the Fill-in Story.

And that's how this comic came to be.

Fellow editor Mike Gold was readying DOOM PATROL for a Summer '87 launch. Work began on the book a year earlier and everyone was humming along. Issues were being turned in and enthusiasm was running high because the book was looking good. Yet Mike wanted to make sure everything would remain smooth. He knew that penciller Steve Lightle was getting many other offers and sooner or later he might choose to leave the series to pursue some other opportunity. What Mike didn't know was when that might be and how quickly he could find another artist to step in and run with the series.

At least Mike knew who he wanted in case Steve ever left the DOOM PATROL. Ever since his days at First Comics, Mike had noticed the work of a young penciller named Erik Larsen. His style was unique and his pencils were filled with vitality and life. Mike wanted to work with Erik and Erik was looking for a series to establish himself.

Still, Erik had to eat and pay rent and so on.

Mike found him some fill-in work here and there. One day, Mike was on the phone with Erik and asked him what comic would Erik most like to take a crack at. The reply was Superman. Mike put the phone down, walked down the hall to Mike Carlin's office and asked if Mr. Carlin just might need a fill-in on Superman. "Sure. I have a plot right here and he can have three weeks," Mr. Carlin said.

So, Erik got to pencil an issue of ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN. Meantime, I had come across his pencils and found them interesting and tossed him a few WHO'S WHO pages. The results were promising and can be found in issue #24, for you completists out there.

Meantime, I was running with the successful launch of SUICIDE SQUAD. However, as with every title, something went a bit awry. Inker Karl Kesel realized that he bit off more than he could chew with both SUPERMAN and SUICIDE SQUAD. He asked off the latter assignment, reluctantly, and I had to find myself another inker.

I was fortunate to find Bob Lewis, a friend of Karl's and someone also looking for a series to do. However, the transition meant that Bob started off behind schedule and had to scramble to catch the series back on time.

In conversation, Mike and I realized that we would both need fill-in issues for our fledgling series—just to be safe. Neither of us remembers who suggested it, but I'm pretty certain it was Mike who decided that we would benefit from a two-part fill-in where the Doom Patrol met the Suicide Squad. After all, the two books had some legitimate connections given Val Vostok's government connections. She headed the Covert Intelligence division of a government funded agency that turned out to be Task Force X, the same birthing place of the Suicide Squad (that division has since metamorphosized into something entirely different and we refer you to CHECKMATE! #1, which goes on sale next week).

The two-parter would be designed in such a way as to fit as two-issues of DOOM PATROL or two issues of SUICIDE SQUAD or one of each. We would bring in talent from both series to produce it, adding some legitimacy to the pairing and thus a stunt was born.

Given their schedules, John Ostrander, writer of SUICIDE SQUAD, found he could plot the two-parter sooner than PATROL scribe Paul Kupperberg. As 1987 progressed, John turned in two neat plots that involved politics, super-heroes, more politics and some heated battles between our teams.

Still, since these were unscheduled tales, who would serve on both sides?

John and Paul wrestled with that one and it was decided to go with the core Doom Patrol members since the newcomers could also be left back at their Kansas City base. For the Squad, we found a handful of villains that had outlived their usefulness to the new DC Universe and secured permission to use them for the last time. There, that was easy.

Erik began pencilling the stories as spring wore on and things were going really well.

In fact, just as SUICIDE SQUAD was a hit, DOOM PATROL debuted as a smash success. It became obvious that this time the comics audience was ready for the team and the series has been on our best seller list ever since. Bob Lewis, meantime, caught up on the deadlines and even pulled ahead a bit.

Mike and I realized that we didn't have to worry about needing fill-ins quite yet. But Mike, ever thinking as he is, had an idea.

If both books were a hit, what about a holiday package with the team-up? A no-ads meeting of the teams that would make sure the readers of SUICIDE SQUAD knew about DOOM PATROL and vice versa?

DC's management knew a good idea when they heard one and promptly scheduled this special for Christmas.

As soon as that word came down, Mike and I poured through the completed pencils and reviewed the two plots. What would be required to tie these two stories together so they worked seamlessly—without a month's wait? Paul came up with a bit more of the political angle; Erik redrew a page and added another and—*viola!*—a double-length one-part story with extra meat.

With that in mind, John and Paul easily found places in the continuity to fit the story. For the record, this mission takes place simultaneously with the story now seen in SUICIDE SQUAD #11-12. The rest of the Squad has their hands full as they aid Speedy (of NEW TEEN TITANS fame) in busting a drug dealer down in Colombia. The story makes up for Rick Flag's absence by making Nightshade leader and brings in Black Orchid. Oh yeah, and Vixen guest stars.

At the end of DOOM PATROL #6 two weeks ago, the group is asked to help out with the Nicaragua situation. While they're down here, the new kids in the team go for a night on the town in issue #7 next month. While cruising the club scene, they encounter the menace of Shrapnel and get to learn what they can do without the veteran members.

Oh yeah, and #6 marked Erik Larsen's debut as penciller on DOOM PATROL.

Just as Mike suspected, Steve found the monthly commitment to DOOM PATROL more than a task. He bowed out after finishing issue #5 and is now busily working on covers for a handful of our titles and illustrating a history section for the seven volume WHO'S WHO IN THE LEGION starting next month.

Erik proved he had the right stuff for the Doom Patrol after this story was completed. Mike knew it would be a matter of time before Erik would be pressed in to service but at least Erik had a chance to help out Andy Helfer close THE OUTSIDERS by pencilling the final two issues—both MILLENNIUM crossovers, for you indexers.

Somewhere during all of the above, Mike got loaded down with more and more projects—things like WASTELAND and FLASH GORDON. Some of his editorial assignments would have to be moved around. Since we worked so closely on this Special together, it made sense for Mike to pass DOOM PATROL my way. So, as Steve left with issue #5, so did Mike as line editor. Erik and I made our splash with issue #6 and really strut out stuff next month (for example, Erik created Shrapnel and handed him to Paul and said, "Here, I want to use him.").

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As in any good comic, let us take a moment to talk about the creators of the story. This way, if you like what they did here, you can seek out their other current projects.

Plotter John Ostrander is a rather busy man these days. First of all, he continues to write *Grimjack* for First Comics. Secondly, he spends most of the rest of his time writing for DC. He is the man who turned FIRESTORM around last summer and made it the sleeper hit for 1987. The series keeps hitting new highs and is worth a look. John has been with SUICIDE SQUAD since I first mentioned the name to him and said, "Here's a nifty title, let's do something with it."

John also co-writes numerous projects such as teaming with Del Close to bring us monthly journeys through a tortured psyche in WASTELAND. He has begun writing with his new wife, Kim Yale, and their first project for DC will be a monthly series featuring MANHUNTER, Mark Shaw who was last seen in SUICIDE SQUAD #10. That book will start up this coming Spring. John and Kim share their Chicago apartment with two large, deadly-but-loveable dogs.

Dialoguer Paul Kupperberg has been waiting nearly a decade to write a monthly DOOM PATROL series. The wait was worth it when one considers the sales figures and positive mail response. This has been a very good year for Paul since he received nothing but rave reviews for his work on the PHANTOM STRANGER mini-series and DP. He also found time to write a fitting ending to VIGILANTE, as seen in issue #50 last month. And, god knows how, Paul managed to fit in a PEACEMAKER mini-series, now in its third issue. As soon as Paul wraps up Peacemaker's mission of world peace, he will embark on a mini-series starring POWER GIRL (and edited by yours truly). He is the co-creator and writer on CHECKMATE!, with art by Steve Erwin, which premieres in just a week. Paul is also learning how to drive now that he has relocated to the wilds of Connecticut.

Penciller Erik Larsen has had his career bandied about throughout this article so there is little left to say about this very imaginative and talented newcomer. He lives in San Francisco and shares a studio with JLI's Al Gordon and Pete McDonnell, brother of SUICIDE SQUAD's Luke McDonnell.

Inker Bob Lewis did some fill-in inking for us throughout 1986. He inked Luke's last issue of JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, an issue of BOOSTER GOLD, bunches of WHO'S WHO pages and a handful of STAR TREK covers. Then, when Karl bowed out of SS, Bob joyfully stepped in. Another Connecticut resident, Bob continues on SUICIDE SQUAD and figures he"l be with that series until issue #35 or so. After that is any one's guess.

Mike Gold, just to be complete about this, is DC's Director of Development and currently edits SONIC DISRUPTORS, WASTELAND, GREEN ARROW, BLACKHAWK, FLASH GORDON and loads of one-shots like SUPERMAN 3-D and FOCUS. As DoD, Mike is working with a number of us editors on launching new ideas. He's working with Barbara Randall on FLASH and PEACEMAKER; with Jonathan Peterson on BLACKHAWK and CHECKMATE! and with me on everything else. Plus a secret new project that will blow your socks off next spring.

And me, I'm working with Mike on the just-out hardcover collection of THE GREATEST SUPERMAN STORIES EVER TOLD and THE PHANTOM mini-series coming in February. Together, with Barbara and Mike, we form DC's Development Team and you'll be seeing our names on a lot of other stuff in the months to come. On my own, I edit SPECTRE, STAR TREK, STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, WARLORD, SUICIDE SQUAD, and DOOM PATROL.

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By all means, drop us a line, telling us what you thought of this package. If it meets with approval, we'll try it again—either with the same teams or maybe with some others that you suggest. We're always game for a challenging idea or in-depth letters. We'll print some comments in both DP and SS in coming months so check both places for your name. Sneaky, ain't we?

Thanks for joining us and we look forward to chatting again in some other introductory space.

—Bob Greenberger

ERIK LARSEN
BOB LEWIS